Warring Comelec execs refuse to shake hands

STORY BELOW, COLUMN 2

Erap buddies seen at Berroya bash

By Carlito Pablo

WHAT was Joseph Estrada's old gang doing at the birthday party of President Macapagal-Arroyo's man?

Tongues wagged when three of Estrada's closest buddies and political allies—former Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn, former Caloocan

ERAP/A16

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Gloria gets tough on Erap

President to act against attacks on courts

By Carlito Pablo and Rocky Nazareno

NO MORE standing back while ousted President Joseph Estrada vilifies the courts and allegedly tries to bring his case to the streets.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday made this declaration before representatives of foreign donors amid criticism that she was indecisive in dealing with her jailed predecessor's antics.

Ms Macapagal said that while the courts would still have to decide on Estrada's cases, "this does not mean that the executive will take a passive stand against any attempt to deliberately undermine the court, subvert allegiance to it or impede its rightful duties."

"The presidency will not stand aside in the face of insidious machinations to take the struggle out of the courtroom and try to evolve it into a conspiracy to foment public disorder and undermine the people's allegiance to the Constitution and the system of justice," she said.

In his most scathing attacks on the Sandiganbayan, which is trying him for plunder and other charges, Estrada had dared the three justices of its special division to turn his trial into a circus by convicting him.

"Your actions betray your true intentions to convict me at all costs . . . even without admissible evidence," Estrada said in a letter dated March 7 to the justices.

In a television interview yesterday, Estrada accused Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. of lobbying for his post through Lucio Tan. ***(Story on Page A2)***

Estrada, who is seeking medical treatment abroad, said he was leaving his fate to the people and to God.

Supporters of Estrada have warned of an uprising if the former President is not allowed to leave for medical treatment in the United States or to go into exile. Police authorities have admitted that Estrada partisans are attempting to raise forces from urban poor communities for anti-government protests.

In a sharp warning to the Estrada camp, the President said that the government would deal harshly with "all subterranean conspiracies" and that conspirators would "face the full retri-

GLORIA/A16

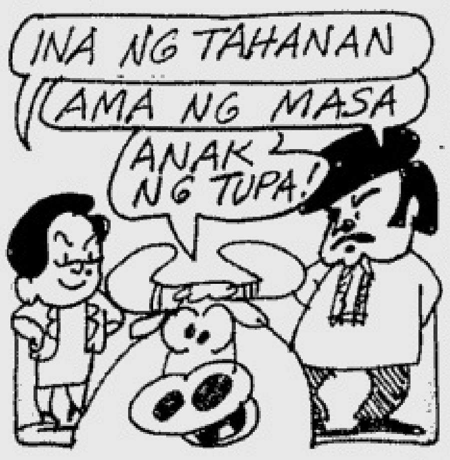
'Ina ng Bayan' vs 'Ama ng Masa'

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

"FATHER vs mother." It's hardly a family feud but refers to the increasingly heated rivalry between President Macapagal-Arroyo and ousted President Joseph Estrada. It's into labels these days.

Ms Macapagal took on the mantle of "Ina ng Bayan (Mother of the Nation)" last week during an

INA/A16



GMA concedes masses don't feel benefits of economy

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A HUMBLED President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday conceded that the masses have yet to feel the benefits of her efforts for economic recovery.

"I don't close my eyes to the problems we face . . . The masses still need to feel the results of what we have done," she said in Filipino at the pilot airing of her radio program, "Ang Panawagan ng Pangulo (The President's Appeal)."

Right at the start of the program, she asked for the people's patience and support.

Economic prosperity does not come instantly, but takes many months and years, according to Ms Macapagal.

"I would not say that we are worse off than we care to realize," she said. "What I would say is that we recognize that the poor still do not feel the fruits of our macro-economic environment."

Facing foreign donor agencies later in Clark Field, Pampanga, she said, "we have much more to do to enable the poor to catch up."

"Growth statistics are meaningless to the jobless. Low inflation is irrelevant to the penniless. A reduced budget deficit cannot be an argument to butter up the morale of hungry people," she said.

Ms Macapagal said her administra-

GMA CONCEDES/A16

EDWIN BACASMAS

SPECIAL BIRTHDAY BOY: So special that President Macapagal herself attends the birthday party of Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya, PNP Central Luzon regional chief.

Sign of rebirth: Resort reopens, security tight

By Raul C. Dancel

PUERTO PRINCESA, Palawan—It's not down and out, it's back in business.

Dos Palmas resort, scene of an Abu Sayyaf kidnapping that triggered a continuing hostage crisis that has drawn to the country 660 US soldiers, reopened Saturday with high hopes and beefed-up security.

"Dos Palmas' reopening is symbolic—it's a sign of rebirth," Ivan Lim, the resort's general manager, said in a news conference. "We want to show the world that we're still here and that we can stand up to the toughest challenges life has to offer."

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon said he had "no doubt" that the resort

SIGN/A16

Reyes admits ransom probably paid to Abus

By Martin P. Marfil, Rocky Nazareno and Ansbert Joaquin
PDI Central Luzon Desk

IT MAY have been a tactical retreat, but it did not go unnoticed. Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said yesterday that ransom was "probably" paid to the Abu Sayyaf in exchange for the release of their hostages. But no ransom passed through or ended up in the hands of the military, he hastened to add.

"Ransom was probably paid but it did not end up with generals, colonels and captains," he told reporters.

But opposition Sen. Sergio Osmeña III rapped Reyes "for making a complete turnaround and completely contradicting what he had said only a few days ago."

Osmeña reminded Reyes of his statement in which he underscored that no ransom was paid at all. "I am positive, I am certain, I'm convinced that there was no (ransom) payment," he quoted Reyes' statement.

Last December, Osmeña startled fellow legislators when he alleged that Malacañang may have had a hand in facilitating a P17-million ransom payoff to the Abu Sayyaf.

His allegation led to the resumption of the congressional investigation into the controversial escape last June 2 of the Abu Sayyaf from a Lamitan hospital in Basilan.

In Olongapo City, the Army general accused of receiving payoffs from Abu Sayyaf bandits during the Lamitan siege said he was happy with how the joint investigation was progressing.

Addressing graduating Reserve Officer Training Corps cadets, Maj. Gen.

REYES/A4

US unmanned planes give Filipino soldiers 'that extra edge'

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The US military has shipped unmanned aerial vehicles to American and Filipino troops taking part in a joint counter-terrorism training exercise in Western Mindanao.

The Gnat UAVs arrived Sunday at the Edwin Andrews Air Base in Zamboanga City. They are expected to support surveillance and intelligence operations against the Abu Sayyaf, which is holding an American missionary couple and a Filipino nurse in nearby Basilan.

Army Maj. Cynthia Teramae, US military spokesperson, yesterday said "more than one" UAV had arrived to give "that extra edge" to Filipino soldiers who are fighting the Moro bandits linked to Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida terrorist network.

The US military last week started calling the controversial war games "Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines," giving credence to claims that the country has become the second front of the US-led global war on terrorism.

The Philippine military still refers to the exercise as Balikatan 02-1, but a spokesperson said the new term did not pose any problem.

"Balikatan falls under our umbrella of Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines. So we are here, shoulder to shoulder, in support of what was born

US/A4

JESS YUSON

TANCANGCO: Non-negotiable, deep-seated opposition to the chair.

COMELEC FEUD

Poll execs refuse to shake hands

By Blanche S. Rivera, Juliet L. Javellana and Cynthia D. Balana

IN THE END, the two-hour meeting came down to a handshake that never took place.

Yesterday, Speaker Jose de Venecia tried to convince Commissioner Luzviminda Tancangco to shake the hand of Commission on Elections Chair Alfredo Benipayo, but she refused and shook hands with another commissioner instead.

The rebuff took place after leaders of 10 political parties met with feuding Comelec officials at the Manila Hotel in an attempt to end the notorious infighting in the poll body.

Undaunted, De Venecia announced a "major breakthrough."

"The commissioners agreed to develop a working relationship to end the paralysis because of the feud between two factions," De Venecia said in a statement.

Opposition Sen. Edgardo Angara echoed the sentiment. "There's already a breakthrough to see that they work as a team," Angara reported to other members of the Commission on Appointments, which is deliberating on the nomination of Benipayo and Commissioners Resurreccion Borra and Florentino Tuazon Jr.

"The two factions agreed to submit proposals to solve the impasse within three months," said Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. While he admitted that reconciliation between the factions headed by Benipayo and Tancangco was not yet certain, Pimentel said that "at least they (had) agreed to start the healing process."

But a high official told the INQUIRER that the CA would bypass Benipayo, and that President Macapagal-Arroyo was not inclined to reappoint him.

In a phone interview with the INQUIRER, Tancangco made clear that her group's opposition to Benipayo and the two other Macapagal appointees was deep-seated.

POLL/A16

JESS YUSON

BENIPAYO: I'll not be a stumbling block in the pursuit of orderly elections.

MAHIRAP PANIWALAAN!

Davide says he didn't lobby for SC top post

By Michael Lim Ubac and Volt Contreras

"I DID not lobby (to get my post)," Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. said yesterday in answer to allegations made by ousted President Joseph Estrada that the highest judicial official in the land had moved heaven and earth" to get the post.

Estrada had told a television interviewer that taipan Lucio Tan was one of those who had lobbied him hard to give the post to Davide.

Although Davide refused to talk to media yesterday, the Supreme Court's senior chief of staff Conrad Tolentino said he had talked to the Chief Justice just after yesterday's flag ceremony at the high court where Davide made the denial.

Davide did not elaborate, Tolentino said.

In a Net 25 TV interview taped last Friday but aired only yesterday morning, Estrada said Tan had invited him to dinner at his penthouse suite at the Century Park Sheraton because "he had something important to say."

"When I entered the penthouse, I saw Justice Davide, whom Tan asked me to appoint as chief justice," Estrada said in Filipino.

"Actually there were two justices being considered then (to succeed retiring Chief Justice Andres) Narvasa—Justice (Josue) Belosillo and him (Davide)," Estrada said.

"Unknown to Davide, he had already been recommended by Justice Narvasa," Estrada added.

Estrada said Davide "approached many people" in seeking the top post, but "I was surprised and wondered why he also approached Lucio Tan to lobby for the appointment."

He then asked, "How could Davide judge my case if one of those who recommended him was Tan, who has many businesses as well as pending cases in court?"

In the TV interview, Estrada said his rift with Tan began after the latter's multibillion-peso tax evasion case was dismissed by the Court of Appeals.

He said Tan "appealed to me not to have the case elevated to the Supreme Court," a plea he denied "in one of the most difficult decisions I've (ever) made."

"That's when we started to part ways. He would no longer see me or talk to me," Estrada said.

Tan is reportedly out of the country but a spokesperson said the business tycoon did not have anything to do with Davide's appointment.

Justice Secretary Hernando Perez yesterday defended Davide, saying he deserved to be the chief justice.

Perez told reporters Davide was the most senior associate justice of the Supreme Court when his predecessor, Narvasa, retired on Nov. 30, 1998.

New Estrada lawyers to get P500 per hearing

By Volt Contreras

HOW much is it worth to defend an ex-President of the Philippines in court?

For the court-appointed lawyers of deposed President Joseph Estrada, a fee of at least P500 awaits each for every court appearance they make in behalf of their reluctant client.

The Sandiganbayan has so far named seven lawyers to defend Estrada, who fired his private lawyers, numbering nine, last week after claiming he could not get justice from the courts.

Ironically, the money to pay Estrada's new defenders will come from the Sandiganbayan's own budget, "subject to the availability of funds," said the anti-graft court's spokesperson Renato Bocar yesterday.

Bocar also said two more government lawyers for Estrada will be named shortly to raise the number of his new lawyers to nine, the same number as his erstwhile private lawyers.

Quoting the 1999 Revised Rules of Court, Bocar said public defenders are entitled to P500 per court appearance if they are handling capital offense cases, like Estrada's plunder case.

The rates for the lawyers in Estrada's three other cases—two counts of perjury and one for illegal use of alias—were not known, but Bocar said the fees for non-capital offenses range from P30 to P200 per appearance.

Women solons take over House, briefly

THE DEPUTY speaker was in bright pink Filipiniana while the majority and minority leaders were in a beige Maria Clara and shiny purple suit, respectively.

It was not that the House's overwhelmingly male leadership had suddenly developed a passion for feminine fashion. It was that for a few hours yesterday, women legislators took over the leadership of the House from the men to mark international Women's Month.

There are 38 women legislators in the 214-member House of Representatives.

As the designated House leaders presided over the session, other women legislators took to the floor arguing for various pro-women legislation such as the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act of 2002.

Brief rule

Acting as Speaker for a few hours was third-termer Pampanga Rep. Zenaida Cruz Ducut while Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine Ramirez-Sato and Aurora Rep. Bellaflor Angara-Castillo were designated acting majority and minority leaders.

It was not sporting good cheer all the way, however, as the women found to their dismay that their domination of the chamber would be somewhat abbreviated.

The congresswomen thought they would rule for a day but were given only three hours.

This did not sit well at all with Akbayan Rep. Loretta Rosales who blew her top when the male legislators took over at a little past 5 p.m. to resume the regular session and deal with what they said was the House's unfinished business.

"I find it unfortunate that on a day that is supposed to be women's day, we would be limited to only a few hours," Rosales said on the floor.

She was particularly incensed when no interpellations were allowed on the proposed Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act despite its being sponsored for plenary discussions yesterday.

She stressed that the anti-trafficking bill was "as urgent as any other bill."

Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II, however, told Rosales that there was an "understanding" that the bill would only be sponsored yesterday after which the chamber would take up the business for the day.

Gonzales acknowledged that it was the practice in the past for an entire day's session to be given over to women legislators in observance of women's day. But he said the House being "under extraordinary situation," he appealed for the regular session to be allowed to resume earlier. ***Christine Avendaño***

Palace scraps 61 agencies in reorganization

By C. Batino

THE OFFICE of the President has abolished 61 agencies and task forces attached to it, transferred 13 offices to other departments and is reviewing 16 others for likely dissolution in its bid to trim the fat off a bloated bureaucracy.

The Presidential Committee on Effective Governance, the body tasked with streamlining the government, listed 61 agencies that had to go, including the formerly influential Economic Coordinating Council (ECC) established by deposed President Joseph Estrada.

The reorganization of the bureaucracy was covered by Executive Order No. 72.

"Agencies that have fulfilled their mandates or have remained dormant shall be abolished, deactivated, merged, consolidated or transferred to other departments," read the EO.

The presidential committee will continue to look for agencies to be abolished or transferred, the order added.

The ECC was a smaller and more powerful "cabinet" created by Estrada supposedly to fast-track the country's economic agenda and win the support of the business community.

Among the 61 agencies to be delisted are the task force to study the country's obligations to Swiss imports inspector SGS, the ad hoc fact-finding committee on behest loans, the Presidential Retirement Income Commission and the Economic Mobilization Group.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the abolition of the offices was part of the government's reengineering plan that would help it cut costs and trim the bureaucracy.

"Some of these offices are already inactive, but I don't know how many would be affected and how much in savings we could generate from this," the finance chief said.

Of the 13 agencies removed from the Office of the President, 11 were task forces that included the Privatization Council, the ad hoc committee on disposition of properties and the special task force against irregularities. These were transferred to the Department of Finance.

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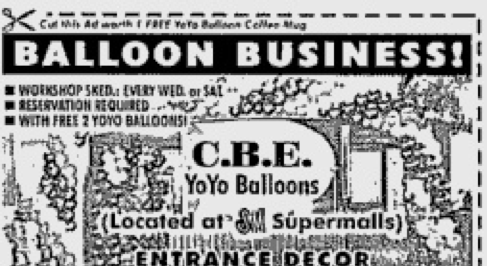

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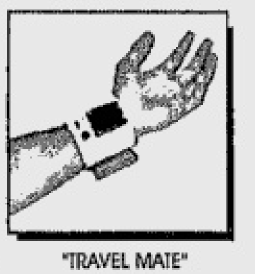

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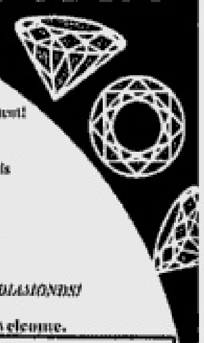

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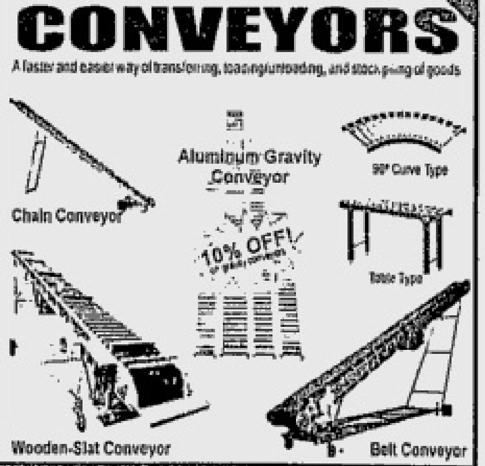

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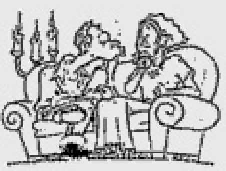

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'PRIVATIZED' CHAUFFEUR

Roco gives up wife's gov't driver

By Donna S. Cueto

AFTER defiantly declaring that he saw nothing wrong with his wife's use of a Department of Education driver, Education Secretary Raul Roco appears to have backed down from a confrontation with his critics.

Yesterday he directed the transfer to "private employment" of the DepEd backup driver assigned to him who was being used as a personal driver by his wife.

"As a matter of utmost prudence, please stop the salaries of the backup driver of the undersigned, effective 28 Feb. 2002," Roco said in a memorandum to Undersecretary Ernesto Pangan.

He also directed Pangan to inquire from the Commission on Audit "if there is a need to reimburse the amounts paid to (the driver)."

Protesting DepEd employees, who have demanded that Roco resign his post, identified the driver as Pablito Aquino, who holds the position of Chauffeur I and a salary grade of 5.

Aquino was receiving from the DepEd a salary of P80,496 a year, or P6,708 a month, based on a copy of his appointment papers obtained by the INQUIRER.

Aquino's appointment was made co-terminous with Roco's Cabinet term. His appointment papers were signed on March 1, 2001 and released on April 26, 2001.

Last Friday, Roco said he saw nothing wrong with his backup driver acting as the personal driver of his wife.

He said it was one of the "non-issues" being used against him by protesting DepEd employees.

Roco explained that he was entitled to two drivers—a main driver and a backup driver. Since he was not using his backup driver, he allowed his wife to use him instead, he said.

"I'm entitled to it anyway, because I could even have one backup," he said.

"I cannot have two drivers *naman* in my car, so I let my wife use the other driver. Is that wrong? Will they therefore feel that if I terminate him I would be doing a great service to the Republic?" he argued.

He claimed that he was the only Cabinet secretary who was not using a backup driver or a backup car.

Yesterday, DepEd employees opposed to Roco again staged a rally against him. They said that they would be staging these "Roco resign" rallies daily during the their one-hour lunch break.

The DepEd employees yesterday went around the DepEd complex, marching in the corridors of the various offices from the ground up to the upper floors.

They chanted "Roco Resign" calls to the tune of "Paru-parong Bukid" and "Ang Boyfriend Kong Baduy."

They again raised the issue of Mrs. Roco's government driver, and Roco's use of a Cebu Pacific helicopter during a two-day visit to the Cordilleras to monitor the construction of school buildings there at a cost to the DepEd of some P217,000.

Bishops hit labor chief on legalizing prostitution

By Armand N. Nocum

THE FORMER head of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines has taken Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas to task for calling on Congress to study the possibility of legalizing prostitution in the country.

Archbishop Oscar Cruz, in an interview with Church reporters, called Sto. Tomas' move "embarrassing and disturbing" because "it is a woman who wants to legally degrade women."

With her proposal, Cruz said Sto. Tomas has practically admitted the administration was helpless to stop prostitution.

"What a big indictment of the government—when a woman official wants prostitution legalized because of government inability to curtail it. She is in effect proclaiming the government inutile," Cruz said.

Cruz was reacting to Sto. Tomas' statement that Congress should consider reviewing the provisions of the Revised Penal Code to see if prostitution could be legalized.

Better protection

She said that in this way, the government could provide better protection to sex workers.

"It is about time we revisited the provisions to see if it would be better if the practice was out in the open and regulated," the labor chief had said.

According to Sto. Tomas, there is a "clamor" for such a move, although this is being opposed by Catholic Church officials.

Cruz said the government's inability to curtail the sex trade and the widespread poverty in the country were not enough justification for people to go into prostitution or for the government to legalize it.

"There are millions upon millions of women who are poor, but they are not prostitutes. And when was our country ever rich, anyway?" he said.

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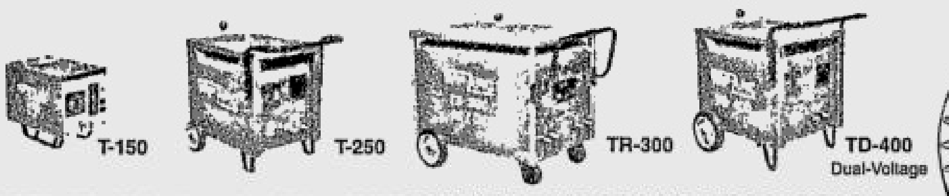

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US brings in unmanned spy planes to track down bandits

From page A1

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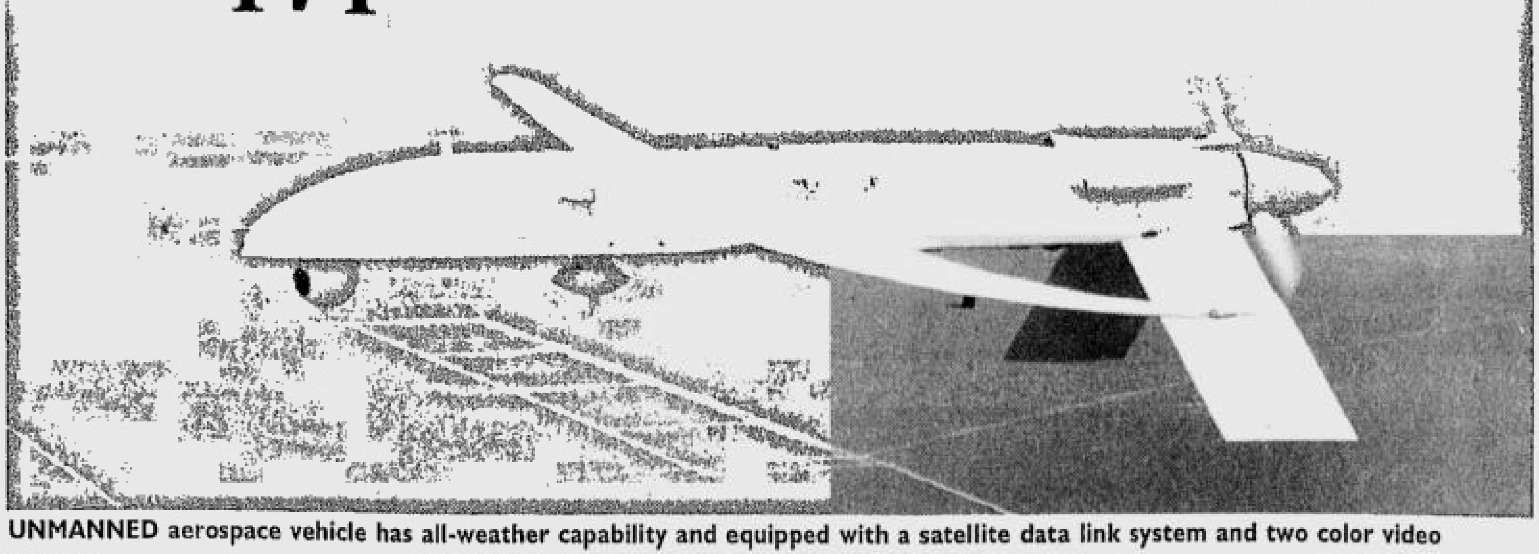

UNMANNED aerospace vehicle has all-weather capability and equipped with a satellite data link system and two color video cameras.

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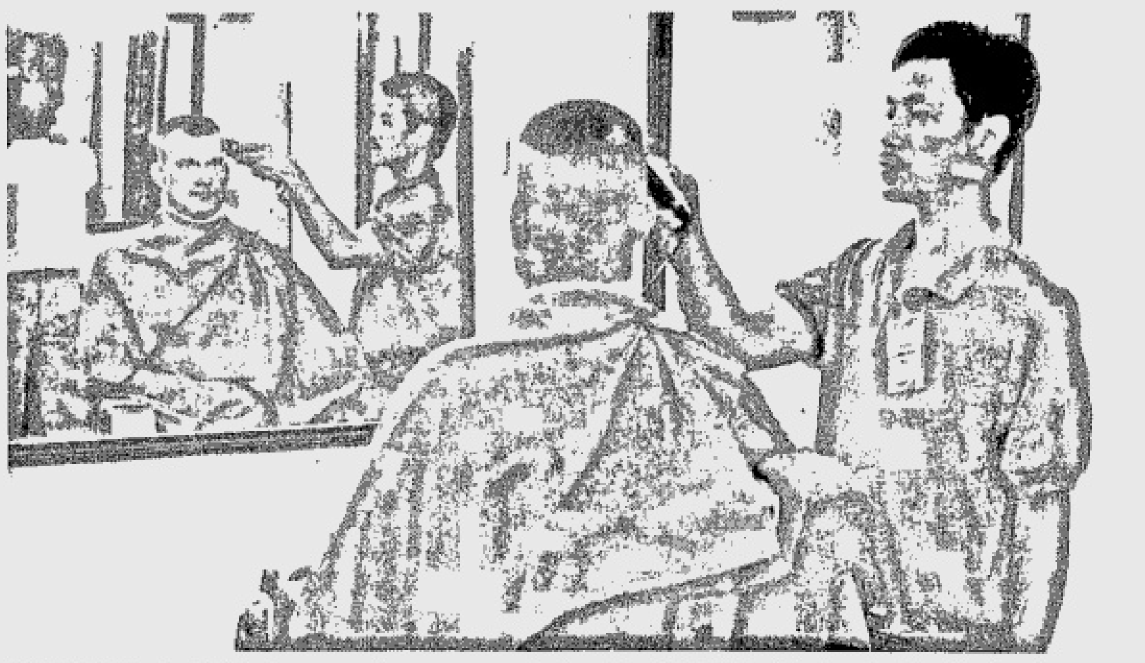

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From page A1

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CONSUMER & OIL PRICE WATCH

-Private Sector-

AN APPEAL TO THE OIL COMPANIES

NO PRICE INCREASE IN MARCH

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The new oil players, who import diesel and gasoline from the region and who maintain an inventory of 7 to 10 days, are entitled to an oil price hike this week. However, we would like to appeal to them to **offset the price increase against the over recovery made from October to December since at that time prices of finished products went down faster and, except for Sea Oil and Flying V, they followed the pricing of the big three refiners.**

OIL PRICE INCREASE IN APRIL

If the current World Oil Prices continue their upward trend and the Oil Price hike **on April 21 exceeds P1.00 per liter**, we will recommend to the Oil Companies to consider **three options:**

Option A - Weekly staggered oil price increase on April 6, 13, 20 and 27.
Option B - Semi-monthly staggered increase on April 13 & 27.
Option C - One time increase on April 21.

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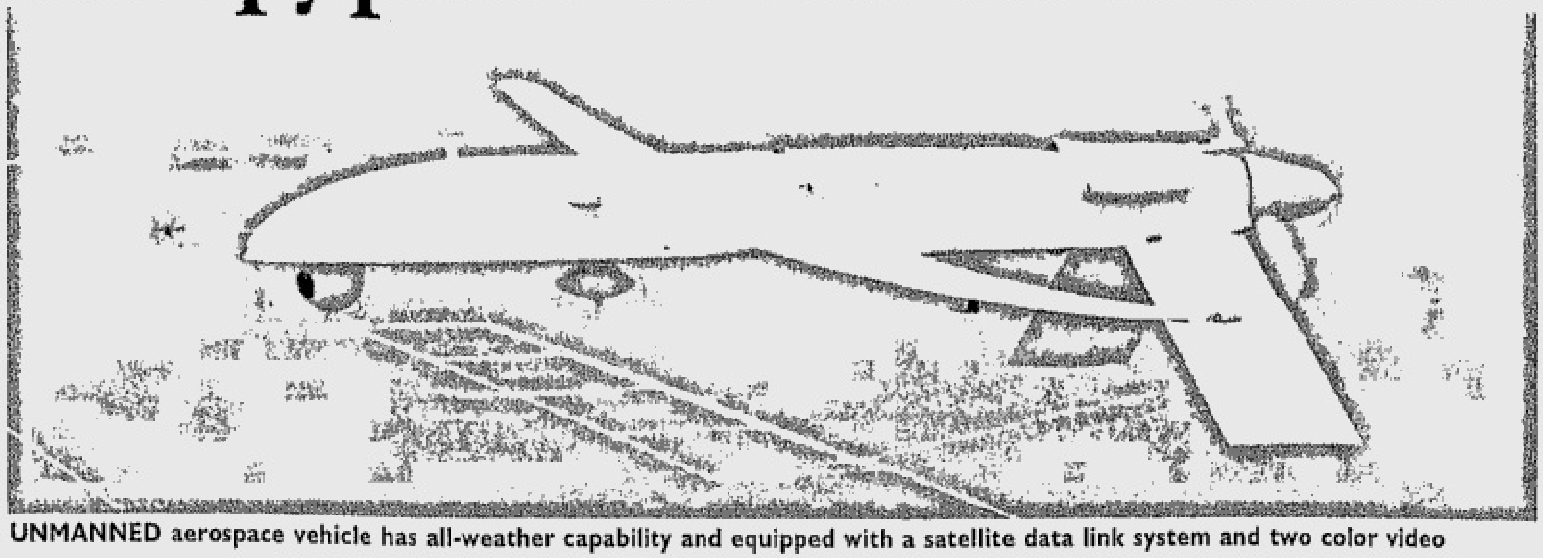

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The **"over recovery" of 31 centavos** as of February 28, that the oil companies still owe the consumer, should be used to **offset the oil price hike of 18 centavos on March 21**. This will still leave a balance of 13 centavos for next month.

While it is true that the average oil price as of March 7 has dramatically increased by **$2.48** per barrel (February average of $19.02 vs. March 7 average of $21.50), **the oil supply to be purchased this month will not be sold** until the third week of April as the big three oil refiners maintain an inventory of 3 weeks to one month.

The new oil players, who import diesel and gasoline from the region and who maintain an inventory of 7 to 10 days, are entitled to an oil price hike this week. However, we would like to appeal to them to **offset the price increase against the over recovery made from October to December since at that time prices of finished products went down faster and, except for Sea Oil and Flying V, they followed the pricing of the big three refiners.**

OIL PRICE INCREASE IN APRIL

If the current World Oil Prices continue their upward trend and the Oil Price hike **on April 21 exceeds P1.00 per liter**, we will recommend to the Oil Companies to consider **three options:**

Option A - Weekly staggered oil price increase on April 6, 13, 20 and 27.

Option B - Semi-monthly staggered increase on April 13 & 27.

Option C - One time increase on April 21.

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Ma makes pitch for DENR chief

By Christian V. Esguerra and Gerald G. Lacuarta

THE 86-YEAR-OLD mother of Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez yesterday came out in defense of her son whose confirmation is facing stiff opposition at the congressional Commission on Appointments.

The bicameral commission is hearing Alvarez's confirmation case today.

In a letter to the INQUIRER, Juanita Alvarez said her son deserved to be appointed "once and for all" because of the many contributions that he has made to the country in his 40 years as a national politician.

She cited Alvarez's record as a staunch anti-Marcos activist, his defiance of the putschists during the coup attempts against the Aquino administration, and his filing of the impeachment complaint against jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada that led to Estrada's ouster.

"As a boy he wanted to be a priest... but he became a politician instead as his way of serving others and his Creator," wrote the elder Alvarez who attended her son's confirmation hearing two weeks ago despite her arthritic knees.

Proud mama

"I am proud he is doing one more job as head of the DENR to protect us all," said Mrs. Alvarez.

But more bad news came Alvarez's way yesterday as three large employees' union in his department registered their opposition to his confirmation, joining 21 other oppositors.

The DENR Employees Union, Concerned Employees of Laguna Lake Development Authority and the Organization of NAMRIA Employees cited union-busting and graft and corruption as their reasons for opposing Alvarez.

The groups raised anew the issue of alleged irregularities in the implementation of a mini-park project in front of the DENR building on Visayas Avenue in Quezon City, which Alvarez is said to have approved.

'Insensitive'

They said Alvarez had shown insensitivity to the needs of his employees by "deliberately" delaying the signing of the collective negotiation agreement (CNA) with the unions.

Julie Ibuan, DENREU president, said the labor unions had initially supported Alvarez's confirmation to give him a chance to prove his leadership.

Employers' plea: No more long holidays, please

EMPLOYERS yesterday appealed to Malacañang not to declare another week-long holiday for the coming Holy Week at the end of the month, as they cannot afford to give the additional pay for those who work on holidays.

The Employers Confederation of the Philippines said it would be disadvantageous to businesses if President Macapagal-Arroyo decides to move the holidays from March 28 to March 25, or on Monday of the Holy Week, to ensure a long rest for workers.

In a letter to the President, Ecop president Donald Dee said, "businesses are still weathering the doldrums" and could not afford to incur yet additional costs in their operations.

The Department of Labor and Employment mandates at least a130-percent daily pay for private employees who work on special holidays as incentive.

"While this plan may benefit to some extent tourism, this and such other benefits, if any, that might accrue are far outweighed by the costs and hardships to be incurred by most businesses and workers as further losses in productivity," Dee said in his letter.

The Ecop's appeal came in the wake of speculations that Malacañang would declare another week-long holiday as it did during the Christmas season last year, citing that the Philippines was very religious country.

The traditional Holy Week holidays start on Maundy Thursday until Good Friday, when Christians around the world commemorate the death of Jesus on the cross. Holy Week ends on Easter Sunday.

The Ecop said there would not be a problem if most employees work on a daily pay and observe the "no work, no pay" basis for compensation, but some enterprises, particularly the small and medium scale firms, have to open shop on Holy Week. *Blanche S. Rivera*

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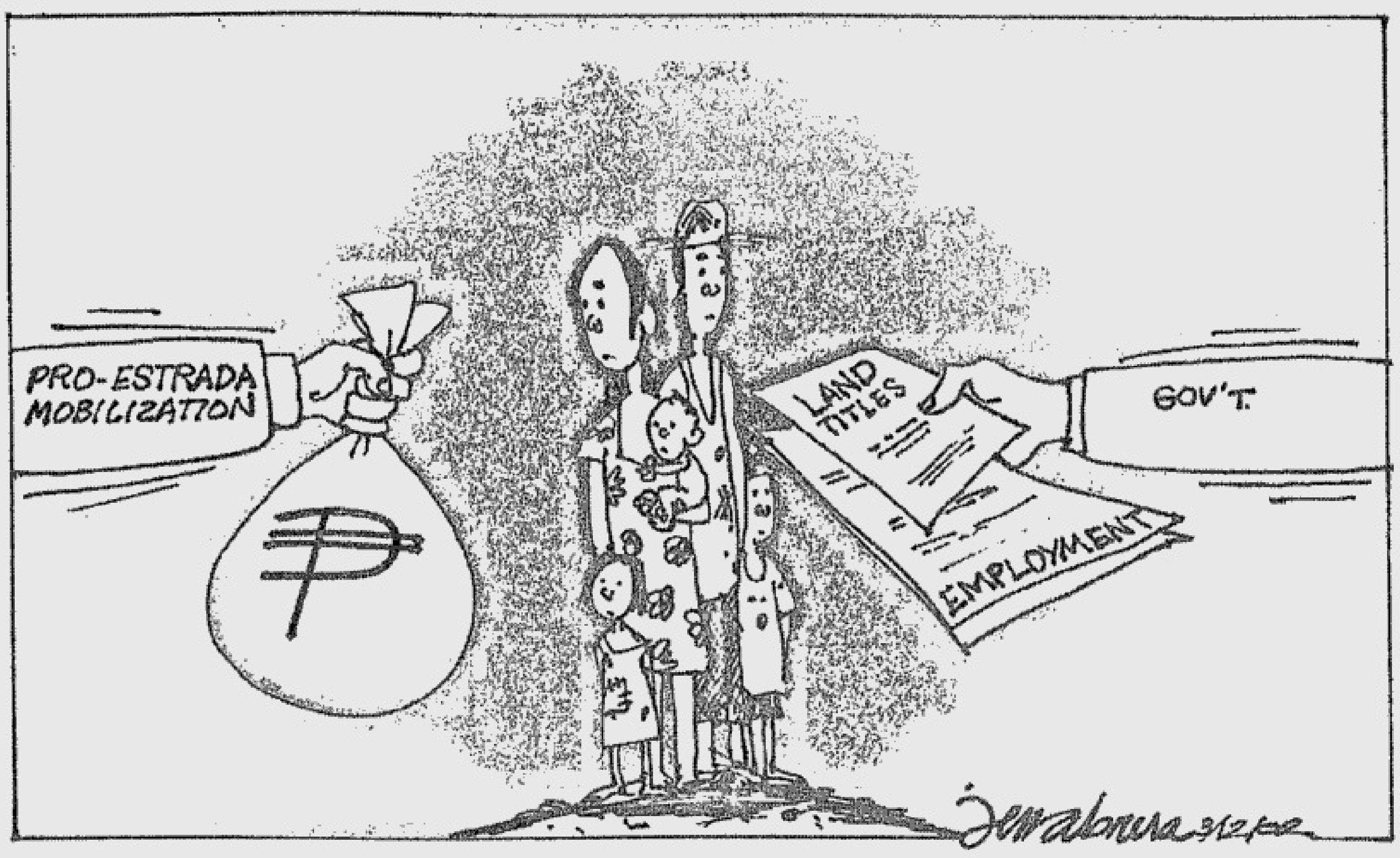

A closer look at prostitution

EDITORIAL

LAST week Labor Secretary Patricia Sto. Tomas called for a review of the anti-prostitution provisions of the Revised Penal Code, a move that could pave the way for the legalization of the sex trade in the country.

She said it was time Congress reviewed the law to find out "if we can be better off if the practice is in the open and can be regulated." She added: "Women engaging in prostitution are victims themselves. Many of them are forced into the job due to lack of opportunities."

Sto. Tomas' objective is to bring the problem out into the open so that commercial sex workers or prostituted women could be protected from abuses. But like the legalization of divorce, the subject of the legalization of prostitution is practically taboo in this predominantly Roman Catholic country.

Prostitution has been with humankind since time immemorial. It has been called the world's oldest profession. Most societies have tried to completely eradicate it, without any success. Prostitution will exist for as long as men (and women too) have a strong sexual urge and will try to find ways to satisfy it outside the bounds of marriage.

But in some countries prostitution is a growing problem because of their poverty and collateral problems such as an inadequate educational system, unemployment and lack of opportunities. Taiwan used to be one such country until it became prosperous. In the 1950s and 1960s prostitution flourished in a Taiwan that was just beginning to emerge from the economic devastation of the Pacific War. Prostituted women were available almost everywhere—in resorts, hotels, bars, restaurants, "beauty salons" and "barbershops."

Prostitution became less of a problem in Taiwan after agrarian reform brought economic development to the countryside and industrialization started a boom in the urban areas. Progress reduced the incidence of poverty, made possible the improvement of the educational system, reduced unemployment and opened a lot of opportunities for decent, well-paying jobs to women, some of whom were formerly engaged in the sex trade.

A similar scenario could take place in the Philippines if only its leaders would lay aside their preoccupation with politics and concentrate on the task of economic and social development. In the meantime it would not harm anyone if Congress would study how prostituted women could be given ample protection under the law.

Prostituted women are twice, and sometimes, even thrice, victimized. First, they are victims of the economic and educational situation. Most of them have had very little education and training and cannot qualify for decent, well-paying jobs. Second, in the course of their work, they are victimized and exploited by their "customers" who subject them to long hours of "use" and make them commit unnatural and perverted acts. They are also exploited by policemen who require them to render free services and extort money from them. And third, sometimes they become media victims, exposed to public shame and humiliation when they are arrested and bundled off by the police to the police station.

Sto. Tomas' proposal should prompt the government to take a closer look at the growing problem of prostitution. Dr. Maggie O'Neill, writing in the Austrian Journal of Sociology, said that "prostitution as work must be understood alongside the feminization of poverty within the context of the restructuring of national economies, unemployment and the growth of a new and poorer underclass." A wholistic solution to the problem of poverty in our country should thus include measures that would bring down the incidence of prostitution.

Prostitution should also be viewed as violence against women and children, since the majority of commercial sex workers in our country are women and children. To be sure, there is a very small fraction of sex workers who are in this occupation by choice. But for a great many of them, prostitution is one of the very few choices open to them because of the peculiar circumstances of inadequacy of education, poverty, unemployment and lack of opportunities in our country. If Sto. Tomas' controversial proposal would result in focussing more attention on these problems, then it would have achieved some good.

Not back-channeling but blackmail

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

FOUR senior political leaders—three former Senate presidents (all of whom are pro-Erap opposition senators) and the incumbent Speaker—are going to use their influence to convince President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and the Sandiganbayan to allow former President Estrada to go abroad for surgery on his knees, "to help avert a political crisis" *kuno*. They call it "back-channeling." The followers of Erap, they said, are threatening "another uprising if he is barred from leaving for abroad either for knee surgery or exile."

With all due respect, that is not back-channeling. That is blackmail. They are threatening the President: You either let him go or you will be deposed.

And she is so scared, she may just do it. She loves being President so much—in spite of her lament that "it is no fun being president"—that she will do anything to stay in Malacañang and be elected again in 2004. But if she thinks that will end her problems, she is mistaken.

Once you give in to blackmailers, they will keep coming back to ask for more. And that will make President Macapagal's second term even less fun than the first one. Every time a politician doesn't get what he wants from the government, he will threaten an uprising and she will quake in her tiny shoes and give in to him.

It is like the Abu Sayyaf and the urban kidnappers. When ransom was paid for the first kidnap victims, those who paid made sure there would be more kidnappings. By paying, they showed that kidnapping pays—and pays handsomely. So a whole new industry was formed.

By surrendering to blackmail, the President will create another new industry. Local leaders will sell the warm bodies of their followers to the highest bidder to demonstrate at Edsa or Mendiola and scare the wits out of whoever occupies Malacañang.

President Macapagal should follow the example of another woman president, Corazon Aquino. She wasn't scared of the threats and posturings of macho ministers, colonels and generals. She actually beat off several coup attempts against her. Courage and sincerity defeated the blackmailers.

Cory succeeded because of one thing: She had no ambition to seek a second term. In fact, she refused to run for reelection. Because of that, she did not have to be an insincere and "plastic" politician and make decisions based on what these will do to her reelection chances. Without this baggage, she was able to do what she thought was right and just.

But ambition does strange things to people. That could be the reason why the incumbent President oftentimes does strange things.

* * *

Like trying to go to the hospital suite of Erap to talk to him, for instance. When Erap snubbed her and refused to let her enter his room, Malacañang suddenly remembered that there was a helipad inside the hospital compound and said that President Macapagal merely used it to fly to Tanauan, Batangas. One of them has to be lying. So who of the two is the habitual liar?

Granted the President entered the hospital compound merely to use the helipad and not to visit Erap, didn't she or her advisers realize that this could be misinterpreted? I myself have taken off from that helipad and I can say that it is really very near the hospital wing where Erap is staying. Anybody who sees the presidential motorcade enter the hospital grounds will immediately conclude that she is there to visit the hospital's most prominent resident. Didn't anybody in her circle ever think of that?

Why, of all places, did they choose the Veterans Memorial Medical Center helipad? The campus of the University of the Philippines nearby has very wide, open grounds where a helicopter can land And what's wrong with Malacañang Park which has a helipad? Palace apologists will have to think of a better excuse.

And supposing she really wanted to talk to Erap, what could be on her mind? What was she planning to say to him? What deal was she going to offer? For betraying justice and the Filipino people, what was she going to ask from Erap in return?

Erap made a mistake in not letting her in. He should have listened to the deal she would offer. Then he could have released a tape recording of their conversation to the press. That would have been a bigger bombshell.

But perhaps the President was just showing the four "back-channelers" that she didn't need them. She is perfectly capable of making backroom deals herself.

* * *

If the four "back-channelers" really want to help, they should work not to let Erap go to the United States but to make his American doctor come here instead to operate on his knees. Since he seems to be a coward, make sure that he will have a battalion of guards. Make it easy to bring in all the equipment and prostheses that he needs, tax- and tariff-free. Make it easy for all his assistants to get visas to the Philippines. Give them all free first-class airline tickets and free accommodations in the best hotel in Metro Manila. And promise to pay all their professional fees and expenses. That should banish all his reservations about coming here to operate on poor Erap to end his suffering.

But if they still want Erap to be allowed to leave and they really believe that he will come back, will these four agree to have Erap tried in absentia and then take his place if he is meted out the death sentence?

Greatness

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE wrote to ask if I wasn't being personal in asking President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to do the glorious thing and say she wouldn't run again. Maybe I just don't like her?

I remember in this respect an Erap ally proposing to me a couple of years ago that I meet with the President. She could arrange it, she said, and she was certain I would like him. I said I had no doubt I would. I had met him before and found him to be personally charming. But it was beside the point. There were things to be said, and my job was to say them.

It's the same thing here. I met the current President long before she became one, and found her personable, if not entirely charming. I did resent the fact that she came barging into the INQUIRER, when the INQUIRER printed a story about her in 1998 raising questions about her connections with Bong Pineda, but that is all. I have no strong reactions to her personally. But I do have strong reactions to her policies.

My suggestion that she make the kind of self-sacrifice she has been asking others to do is a deathly serious one. The advantages for the nation are incalculable.

If Ms Macapagal announces that she will not run again, she removes in one fell swoop the one thing that has hounded, and will hound, her term like an albatross, which is the specter of "politicking." Ms Macapagal is the only President after 1986 who can run again, a prospect fraught with unsavory consequences. It makes her term politically charged in the extreme, making her every move suspect, throwing political figures into intense competition and partisanship. It makes the possibility of consensus and compromise more remote.

I said before and I say again that her appeal for people to stop "politicking" should begin with her. She is the one whose every move will be construed as angled toward 2004—not just by her rivals but by her constituents. At that, she hasn't exactly been very good at hiding it.

More immediately, Ms Macapagal says she will only make sure in her three years that this country is set on the right path, the onerous burdens of the past lifted off its back, and she can prosecute Erap with nothing to fear. Certainly, she need not fear the wrath of Erap's legions in 2004—they cannot touch her. Those legions are clearly the one thing she has been very leery of these past months, driving her to all sorts of contortions to appease them. The attempt to visit Erap at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center was but the latest episode in that soap opera.

Trials, to repeat, are a curious thing in that they reflect on the trier as much as the tried. If Ms Macapagal shows she is only concerned about doing the right thing for the nation and not for herself, her credibility takes a quantum leap. She takes on the stature of Hilario Davide during the impeachment trial, a transcendent authority so thoroughly devoid of self-interest. If Ms Macapagal does that, not all of Erap's acting, or overacting, will stop the inexorable.

The advantages for Ms Macapagal are just as incalculable. Look where she is now, and look where she can go.

Where she is now is pathetically trying to woo Erap's legions by his methods, or indeed by Imeldific means. "Ina ng Bayan" is the title of her recent TV offering, which is poaching on Imelda's territory, and which will probably go the same route as her son's movie. From "*ate*" to "*ina*" is quite a quantum leap, made possible only by the quantum imagination, or delusions, of Dante Ang. The title of Erap's recent video is "Ama ng masa." It is no coincidence that the past and present presidents should simultaneously be vying for parental rights over the nation.

And can anything be more pathetic than that effort to visit Erap? Malacañang would initially deny it and say the hospital just happened to have the nearest helipad from Channel 4. Which is silly because V Luna Hospital and Camps Crame and Aguinaldo are not too far off. Only a president with Erap's IQ would not have understood the implications of being in Veterans at that time—and Ms Macapagal prides herself in having a higher one.

Sen. Joker Arroyo would later say Erap lost points by snubbing the presidential overture. How can that be so? Obviously, it was Ms Macapagal who meant to score points with the visit. It would not have produced any tangible results, but it would have produced pictures which, as the world—and Erap—knows, is worth a thousand words. The talk would not have produced deals, but the photo would have done wonders for Ms Macapagal's current image-building binge. It would have helped appease Erap's legions without committing the President to anything.

If Ms Macapagal applies all her energies to governing here and now rather than campaigning for a next term, she can become the best President this country ever had. She can become the President who brought the country together, who sparked a sense of idealism among Filipinos by dint of example, by showing everyone that the country comes first before personal ambition. She can be remembered for the sublime irony that the best President of this country was the one who was never elected. Not everyone gets to have a crack at greatness this way.

This country got a second chance in life when Edsa II happened, and the perfect opportunity to put it on the right track won't come again in a long, long time. Probably never. Heaven help us if another president wastes another historic opportunity by devoting her energies merely to staying in power.

There's a well-known saying that it's not how long it is, it is what you do with it. What applies to what's down there applies to what's up there—or the presidency—as well. It's not how long you have to govern, it's how well you do with the time you have.

'Competent driver needs more fuel'—GMA

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

CLARK ECONOMIC ZONE —Yesterday I joined my husband who's attending the two-day 2002 Consultative Group Meeting here co-chaired by Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and Robert Vance Pulley, the World Bank's country director. The annual CG Meeting, the second to be hosted by the Philippines (the first was in Tagaytay two years ago), drew high-level representatives from the international donor community, who heard from Philippine officials updates on the government's development programs and projects, and where the donors could come in with their official development assistance (ODA). The donors, in turn, offered their interesting critique of this programs.

President Macapagal keynoted the gathering and emphasized various aspects of her 14-month governance, in line with the conference theme, "Winning the War against Poverty through Good Governance." Citing "a few accomplishments" such as the two million jobs she claimed to have been created since coming into office, and last year's 3.4 percent GDP growth ("which exceeded all expectations, including our own") and 3.7 percent GNP growth, GMA likened her administration to driving a car. "The RP car is in good working condition and I hope you believe me when I say that it has a competent driver at the wheel," she said. But she added that "we need more fuel for the car to reach its goal." The hearty applause she got from the foreign audience for that point seemed to buttress Pulley's assertion that "political stabilization and the President's good team have brought about good results for the country, despite the world economic downturn."

* * *

Pulley spoke of the perception of "political stabilization" in RP, but in another part of his opening remarks, he also pointed to the need to improve peace and order. Ms Macapagal was obviously eager to assure the foreign donors that she meant to preserve this stability, for in her speech she addressed the problem perceived to be the current No. 1 source of political instability: what media have dubbed as the "Erap problem." The foreign donors listened intently as GMA forcefully asserted that there is "no strategy" for appeasement in Manila and that the defense of the rule of law is "non-negotiable." She stressed that while she was leaving the question of her predecessor's agitation to go abroad for medical treatment entirely to the courts, this didn't mean she was going to be "passive" to Estrada's efforts to undermine the country's institutions, especially the judiciary. The rule of law is something that the representatives of the developed donor countries understand well, and GMA's commitment to it is most reassuring.

Regarding the peace and order problem, she sought to allay the foreign community's fears by pointing out that an additional P200 million has been earmarked for the anti-kidnapping efforts of the PNP task force headed by Deputy Director-General Hermogenes Ebdane. This point needs restating, for even as official statistics say that the crime volume went down in 2001 by 5.1 percent, the number of kidnap-for-ransom cases has doubled, affecting the perception of foreigners safety in this country.

* * *

In line with government's efforts to tackle criminality, it's good to highlight as well the efforts of the PNP to curb the hold-ups that have become daily occurrences in buses and jeepneys in Metro Manila. Unlike kidnapping, which is a high-profile activity, the hold-ups in public transportation victimize ordinary citizens who appear helpless. Recently I wrote about how a friend of my son, 35-year-old Raymond Rinoza, a senior reliability engineer working with Lufthansa Technik Phil., was held up together with other passengers inside a bus along Edsa by five men armed with knives and guns. Luckily the engineer was able to hide under his seat a bigger sum he had just withdrawn.

* * *

Director Edgar Aglipay, PNP chief for Metro Manila, has been acting on this problem. Last week he called for a meeting with the biggest bus, jeepney, taxi and FX operators to find out what could be done about the problem. Among those who showed up were Obet Martin of Pasang Masda, Zenaida Maranan of the Federation of Jeepney Operators, Amelia de Dios of the Inter-city Bus Operators Association and Nene Mendoza of the Southern Metro Manila Federation of Bus Companies. Aglipay invited me to attend, and I grabbed the chance to talk to the operators.

They admitted that hold-ups in public vehicles have become rampant, exacerbated by the drug problem . Maranan noted that one of the most notorious routes was the one bound for Navotas, since market vendors carry big sums of money in the early morning hours to buy fish wholesale. The vehicle operators said they were glad that the police were attending to the situation.

In that meeting it was agreed that a memorandum of agreement be forged between the police and the transport operators for greater cooperation to minimize holdups and the *kotong* activities of policemen, and to ensure safer and more disciplined driving in our streets. The plan also calls for the conduct of similar dialogues regularly.

Aglipay said that in answer to Sen. Rene Cayetano's call for more police presence, uniformed policemen will be riding buses at random during daytime. At night armed cops in plain clothes will be fielded. More cops will also be assigned at bus pick-up and unloading areas where holdups have been reported.

The operators, on the other hand, confirmed that some of their drivers were involved with hold-up gangs and promised to submit to the PNP profiles of their drivers for a security check.

Terrorists and Bonifacio

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I DON'T know if anyone still remembers, but there was once a depiction of the national anthem shown in movie houses that was based on the Bonifacio Monument. Located as it is in the center of a busy rotonda, where crossing over to catch a closer glimpse of the figures would be a death-defying act, few Filipinos have had a chance to appreciate the details of this Guillermo Tolentino masterpiece. But when that "Pambansang Awit" film closed in on details of the monument, I was moved almost to tears.

In his design, for which he won a national competition in 1930, Tolentino sought not only to honor the founder of the Katipunan but also to celebrate and commemorate Bonifacio's life in the context of the Filipino people's struggle against Spain which culminated in the revolution.

The "story" that Tolentino sought to tell begins with the seated hooded figure at the back of the obelisk, his neck in a vise. Recall that Fathers Gomez, Burgos and Zamora, advocates for the Filipinization of the clergy, were garroted in public for their alleged conspiracy in an uprising in Cavite. Recall, too, that Jose Rizal wrote that were it not for the killing of these three priests, which stoked his latent nationalism and rebelliousness, he would have followed the typical trajectory of a well-educated member of the *ilustrado* class. So in many ways, this was the beginning of the revolution that Bonifacio launched, but tragically did not see to the end.

From this faceless figure flow other bronze tableaus, depicting instances of Spanish tyranny and oppression, as well as illustrations of individual defiance. Cutting a strong figure is the *salakot*-wearing *Katipunero* cutting his forearm, preparatory to signing his name in blood in accordance with the "KKK's" initiation ritual.

* * *

THE CENTRAL figure in the monument is, of course, that of Bonifacio, whose heroic stance, both feet planted firmly on the ground, clutching a bolo and a pistol in each hand, the flag billowing behind him, is the natural crest of the "wave" of movement that Tolentino coaxed out of stubborn metal.

Individually, the scenes and figures are so full of humanity and passion they move onlookers to tears. You could almost hear the bare-chested fighter, his bolo raised in righteous anger, issuing a call to arms. But as powerful and moving as the individual "scenes" are, the tableau increases in power exponentially as a whole, one image of suffering and rebellion leading and adding to the impact of the next. It is not only a homage to the Great Plebeian, it also tells the story, in a uniquely personal and dramatic manner, of our people's sacrifices, our defeats and victories, in our fight for freedom.

The Rizal Monument in Luneta may be more familiar, being the scene of most official rites, but the Bonifacio Monument packs more emotional and intellectual punch. It is the testament to the courage and sacrifices of that generation of Filipinos around the turn of the century who dared imagine that we could become a nation, and gave their lives for the fulfillment of that ideal.

* * *

BUT as they say, *"onli in the Pilipins."* Only in this country, indeed, and only with such benighted officials as Caloocan City Mayor Rey Malonzo, would such a national treasure as the Bonifacio Monument be threatened today by such a prosaic "need" as the extension of the Light Rail Transit line and connection with the Metrorail.

Malonzo is guilty of obfuscation, or even more plausible, historical ignorance, when he says the monument won't be destroyed, only moved, to give way to the overhead transport lines. Is the monument in "Monumento" (which the locale has come to be known) only by accident or out of convenience? The rotonda marks the junction of Rizal Avenue, the northward MacArthur Highway, and a circumferential road then called Highway 54 but now better known as Edsa. The rotonda and monument serves as an entryway to Manila from the North, a most impressive and inspiring welcome.

* * *

EVEN more significant is the historical meaning of the site. The competition for the monument's design was in fact launched to commemorate the "Cry of Balintawak," an event widely believed to have sparked the Revolution of 1896. The monument marks the spot where, it is believed, the Katipuneros gathered to tear up their *cedulas* and declare their defiance of the Spanish colonial government.

Standing on the site of a historical milestone, dominating the bustling landscape of a growing metropolis, the Bonifacio Monument is just where it belongs, and should remain there.

Being transferred to the Tala Leprosarium, or even to the Luneta or at the end of Bonifacio Drive (as another benighted mayor, Lito Atienza, so blithely offers) is a disservice to the monument. Not only will it be plunked down in obscurity, it will lose its meaning altogether.

The Bonifacio Monument has been standing on that spot since before World War II. Will it have survived the bombs of the Americans and Japanese only to fall to the LRT and MRT? Aren't such constructions supposed to be planned beforehand? Couldn't the city planners of Caloocan (if there are any) and the rail transit authorities have planned the extension routes around the monument and not through it?

As urban planner Paulo Alcazaren said in his column in another paper: "To move the monument is to give in to the terrorism of unplanned development, unmanaged urban sprawl and uninspiring urban design." Indeed, terrorists come in all sorts of guises, including that of clueless mayors.

'Costumbres Chinas' (3)

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

Bambi L.Harper

(FOLLOWING is the conclusion of the article written by Paz Yuchengco translated from Spanish.)

"The presents of these guests will demonstrate the wealth and social status of the father of the bride. An interesting aspect of this custom is that each chauffeur or employee who delivers them receives a gratuity which always has to be an even number. After the feast the bride's family packs the presents and send them to the new house or to the house of her in-laws but not without showing them off first to relatives and friends. The gossip about them will give added prestige to the father of the bride.

"There are items that the bride always has to include among her belongings: two lamps for the master's bedroom, a dozen different types of sweets, a mirror covered by a red cloth, a complete tea set and a urinal wrapped in red paper. The last indicates that the couple will have many children. If the bride lacks some of them, her inlaws will feel insulted and will reproach her and her parents for all the bad things that may happen. The bride must remember that none of her personal things should be black. If she desires a black bag or a black pair of shoes, for example, she can only wear them after the wedding.

"The problems of the family of the bride are over once her things are brought over to her fiancé's house. The expenses and headaches are now transferred to the future groom's family. The tips of that day are the largest especially for the two younger brothers or cousins of the bride who accompany her things. In general, a rich bride needs two or three carts (or conveyances) aside from a car to bring her many gifts and belongings. Then there are more or less 10 or 12 men who bring the things inside the house. You can imagine how much the groom's father has to shell out on tips. (In the 1960s, it was P10 to P12 per, and for every two of the younger brothers, it was P48. The most then was P120 for each of them or P240.) The tips to the younger brothers were a demonstration of the fortune of the groom's family. The amount of these tips depended in general on how many things the bride has.

"The Chinese wedding these days is almost the same as that of Filipinos. Chinese ceremonies in China are very different from that of the local Chinese. There is much Filipino influence on local Chinese weddings. Even if the two families are not Christian, the wedding, almost always, is in a church (Catholic or Protestant) with all the religious ceremony and the presence of sponsors.

"With regard to the sponsors, it is interesting to know that among the Chinese they receive a great many presents from both families. Many times one of the sponsors is the matchmaker, especially if he is rich and prominent.

"For another week after the wedding, there is much activity in the groom's house. The day after the wedding, the bride has to rise very early and don a red dress. She has to prepare for the 'tea ceremony,' one of the important ceremonies in a Chinese wedding. The bride begins her official duties as a daughter-in-law. From that day on she is under orders from her in-laws.

"As a bride, the Chinese woman has an important role and becomes 'queen for a day.' None of this lasts very long. As a daughter-in-law, her position changes immediately, and becomes worse than that of a daughter. Her own parents consider her a stranger, her in-laws treat her like a maid, and her husband thinks of her as the mother of his children, not as a wife. Poor woman! Even the children do not give her the same respect they give their father. Neither do they demonstrate any affection toward her.

"The life of a Chinese daughter-in-law does not improve until she becomes a mother-in-law herself, which is usually toward the latter part of her life. Despite all this, most Chinese women accept this degradation with patience and indifference—even those who are modern or have studied or travelled to other countries.

"We return to the new daughter-in-law. The 'tea ceremony' is advantageous to the bride. If her in-laws are rich, they give a large tip or expensive jewelry. Afterwards she has to serve tea to all the close relatives, and in exchange they also tip her or gift her with gold jewelry.

"There is one more ceremony that the new bride has to perform before she loses her importance. This is the ceremony of returning to her parent's house. A Chinese bride has to wait at least three or five days before visiting her family. First, her parents have to send her eldest brother with flowers to her house. This is like a formal invitation to invite their daughter and her husband. The couple, then, leave with the brother, bringing gifts of food and sweets and some money wrapped in red paper. These are prepared by the in-laws and the bride's parents have to distribute them to their relatives and children. The couple remain until nighttime when the party for her is over.

"When they leave her parents also give her food and sweets to distribute among the relatives of her husband. The wedding ceremonies end that day and the bride begins a new life."

Scared

YOUNGBLOOD

Merzenaida Donovan

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

THE POSSIBILITY that I had breast cancer was the biggest scare of my life, to date. I was going through my annual physical examination when our company physician discovered that I had lumps in my left breast and recommended that I have them removed surgically.

I stared at her in horror and disbelief. I had never been hospitalized in my life. The thought of surgeon's sharp scalpel cutting my flesh chilled me down to my bones. It was worse than my near-death, drowning experience 14 years ago and my headlong fall down the staircase in an almost forgotten childhood mishap.

The doctor explained that although the lumps appeared to be fibroadenoma, a case of breast mass that develops due to hormonal imbalance, they were still tumors that had to be removed. Once removed, a biopsy had to be done to determine whether the tumors were benign or malignant. If found to be malignant, then I would have to undergo chemotherapy like all cancer patients.

Some of the doctors explanations just went through my ears without being understood. My palms began to sweat and I had to sit down on the nearest bench because my legs were starting to feel very weak.

Tumors? I racked my brain for reasons why on earth I had them. I was eating well; I even counted my calorie intake sometimes and I looked at the nutritional values printed on the pre-packed products I bought at the supermarket. I didn't smoke. I exercised. I limited my alcohol intake to two cocktails on social occasions, although I would very much have liked to have a shot of vodka straight up. I slept at least eight hours a day and, if I had the luxury, I would sleep even half of the day. My mother said that I had completed all my vaccinations and I took all of my vitamins.

Bad gene pool? My mother and my grandmothers on both sides were all size 36C and they didn't have lumps in their breasts.

Frustrated, I could not think of anything that would help allay my fears.

At first I never told anyone that I had tumors in my breast. I went on with my life as if the incident never happened. I did not undergo an operation right away. I was hoping deep down that one day the lumps would simply disappear and everything would just end like a bad dream. But it never happened.

I started to feel instead the needle-like pricking in the innermost recesses of my flesh at night after the support of the brassiere was gone. I ignored the pain and tried not to think about it by focusing on wonderful things so I could have a good night's sleep. But when mornings came, the fear would come back.

When the pebbles of fear and apprehension started to turn into heavy stone in my heart, I decided to do something. I went to two doctors to get their opinion.

They found the same lumps. But this time, I asked them to explain to me the nature of fibroadenoma. How do you get it? I asked them. How can you avoid it? And so on and so forth.

The doctors told me that if the lumps grew smaller after my ovulation period, the chances were greater that the tumors were benign. They asked me if that was the case, and I told them yes.

That was a lie. The truth was that I was too uncomfortable to perform breast self-examination much less try to determine whether the lumps were getting smaller.

To my relief, they did not recommend surgery saying that anyway I was still young, the lumps got smaller after my ovulation period and the masses were defined. They also taught me how to perform a breast self-examination properly and advised me to do it monthly so that I could monitor the lumps.

I followed their instructions religiously, scaring myself every month, as the lumps appeared bigger and more pronounced. The pains at night started to haunt me in my sleep. I was scared because I did not know why I had them, how I could get rid of them and what would become of me. I had to bear the weight of my fears alone because I told no one about them. I was in one big denial.

In the morning after I put on my brassiere, I acted as if everything was normal. I partied with my friends. I worked. I traveled. But topics relating to breast cancer were the things I didn't like to hear about during social chitchat. Whenever I saw Maritoni Fernandez on TV talking about how she survived breast cancer, I switched the channel. I couldn't bring myself to read articles about breast cancer in women's magazines. These things were so close to the truth that I was denying.

One year passed. The lumps in my left breast were bigger, much more pronounced, and I had two other small lumps in my right breast. The pain was getting worse, especially during winter. I was overseas then, attending a university. I was away, alone in a foreign country, and I was angry, confused and terrified.

I prayed for courage and listened to myself. I was ashamed that I had lie to myself. Out of my shame, I stumbled into self-realization and acceptance. I faced the fact that I might die young. That could be my fate, I told myself, but it would be completely cowardly of me to die without telling my mother how much I loved her and how much she meant to me. I realized that I should not die unprepared and terrified. I would never really know if I did not stop running and start confronting it. And I grew up.

I called my mother and I told her. I also informed her about my decision to go home and undergo bilateral surgery. She cried on the phone, but I had gathered enough courage to assure her that everything would be fine and I would be fine, no matter what.

I underwent almost four hours of bilateral surgery last Jan. 7, 2002. All of my tumors proved to be benign.

I have been scarred by the surgery but I am no longer scared.

Merzenaida Donovan, 24, is encouraging women with lumps in their breast to face their fears and consult a breast cancer specialist.

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US military presence dividing the nation

I'M an American living in the Philippines. To me, the recent deployment of US troops in Basilan is shamefully wrong. It has sparked a debate that has put a wedge of division among the Filipino people. This act of US intervention has turned friends into enemies as this nation tries to resolve the correctness or incorrectness of the US military presence in the Philippines.

It is a disgrace to the sovereignty of the Philippines to witness the US military setting up camp in combat areas Mindanao. This is a clear violation of the Philippine Constitution. Those who defend the idea of having US troops in the Philippines argue that two agreements, namely, the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 (MDT) and the Visiting Forces Agreement of 1999 (VFA) make the deployment of US troops in the Philippines constitutional. However, a closer scrutiny of both agreements would show them to be wrong.

Article II of the MDT states that only when the Philippines is threatened by "external armed attack in the Pacific" can the MDT be applicable. The Abu Sayyaf is not "an external armed attack," it is an internal group composed of Filipinos. Thus, the MDT does not apply to this military operation to neutralize the Abu Sayyaf.

The Visiting Forces Agreement, on the other hand, was ratified with the specific guideline that it covers only joint military exercises lasting four days to four weeks and should be conducted outside of a combat area. The time frame of six months now projected for the activities and the deployment in the combat area of Basilan serve to belied the argument that the US deployment of troops falls under the VFA. The VFA cannot be applied to the form and manner of US involvement in Mindanao.

Since both treaties do not apply, then the 1987 constitutional requirement found in Article XVIII, Section 25, which states that "foreign military bases, troops, or facilities shall not be allowed in the Philippines, except under a treaty," has been violated.

A nation depends on the strength and integrity of its Constitution. It sets the tone for nation building, it serves as the moral authority over the nation and it is the highest law of the land. But if the highest law can be warped, distorted and influenced, what example is being set for the nation? How can one expect integrity from any citizen whose Constitution can be bent so easily? A Constitution that has lost its integrity because it was bent by pressure from the United States is a disgrace to every American.

The deployment of US troops with specific instructions to assist in neutralizing the Abu Sayyaf could result in the accidental death of a US soldier or even a suicide attack on US barracks. This could lead to a demand from the US government to step up the operations with greater reinforcement and it could authorize US soldiers to engage in battle. There is also the possibility that the Abu Sayyaf maybe neutralized and in the course of jubilation the Philippine government could extend the invitation to include a military solution to its problems with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and New People's Army. Furthermore, there is the possibility of the insurgency groups forming alliances under the common banner of anti-US interventionism.

All these point to more death and violence created by the American presence and the tragic irony of Americans supporting one group of Filipinos in killing another group of Filipinos.

—PROF. CARLTON PALM, Silliman University, Hibbard Avenue, Dumaguete City

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

To save the republic or to keep Erap?

IN THE REAL world of politics, a chopsuey of ambiguities and contradictions, it will be well to look back to history for lessons in crisis management.

In Abraham Lincoln's reply to the editor of The New York Times, he clearly expressed his policy on slavery in relation to saving the Union thus: "If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would also do it."

Eventually, he signed the landmark "The Emancipation Proclamation" freeing all the slaves—and saving the Union.

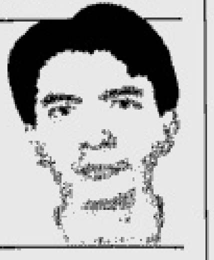
In my opinion, as in the foregoing example, national interest and the conflict in connection with the cases of former President Joseph Estrada must be reconciled so that the country can move on.

Allowing the former president to seek medical attention abroad, by judicial statesmanship, seems to be the best option.

—ANTONIO A. TALAO, 2378 Banaba United Hills Village, Parañaque City

Absentee voting and dual citizenship

PINOY KASI



Michael Tan

INSTEAD of launching more investigations, our legislators should seriously discuss two pending bills that affect the lives of our overseas Filipinos.

The two bills are very different. One concerns the right to vote of Filipinos abroad who have retained Filipino citizenship. The other proposes dual citizenship, which means, for example, a Filipino who wants to become American can do so without renouncing his Filipino citizenship.

If we want to set our priorities right, we should fast-track the bill to allow absentee voting. The main impediment to absentee voting is technical in nature, that is, minimizing the possibilities of fraud. But that should not be grounds to continue to withhold the right to vote, especially when an estimated 10 percent of our adult population works overseas.

Absentee voting will force our politicians to look at our overseas workers as more than just sources of foreign exchange. The politicians know they can't quite use traditional gimmicks to court the overseas workers. There are no babies to kiss, no hands to shake, so if you don't deliver on promises, then you don't get a vote, which is the way elections should go.

On the matter of dual citizenship, my feelings are more ambivalent. The rationale behind the proposal is that this would allow us to tap the talents and financial resources of Filipinos who would otherwise have been forced to give up Filipino citizenship. Dual citizenship offers "perks"—Filipinos would be encouraged to invest here because they can own land, for example, which they can't once they've renounced Filipino citizenship.

I agree that we do lose out on so much talent once Filipinos take up citizenship in another country.

But there's more to loving a country than citizenship. If I may use outside examples, we know that many overseas Chinese are major investors in China, and often do this without making money or with very little profit. They do this without having to take up Chinese citizenship. The Chinese government spells out the rules, with as many restrictions as there are incentives.

The problem really is that there's little love lost when Filipinos settle in the United States, Canada or Australia. A Filipino cultural identity is weak to begin with and disappears quickly, way before renouncing Filipino citizenship (or, some would argue, even before they leave for the States). Sure there are Sunday potlucks with Filipino food but just watch how the first generation of overseas Filipino children grow up: they can't speak Filipino languages and are taught little about the culture back home, except that it's "backward" and "old-fashioned." Filipino culture is retained only when convenient, for example, "Be obedient to your parents."

To some extent the Filipino quickly sheds off his or her Pinoyness because of shame. We make the news abroad only if there's an earthquake or volcanic eruption, or when there's a major political scandal, or when the President begs Scotland Yard and New York's ex-mayor to help us with law enforcement. Who wants to be Filipino in those circumstances?

I am not faulting the Filipino alone. Our mental colonization was thorough: the Americans made sure about that so that Filipinos now are more staunch defenders of American government policies than Americans themselves. The coconut comes to mind—brown on the outside, white inside.

My point is that dual citizenship will not necessarily mean a pouring in of investments from overseas Filipinos, or a surge in patriotic feelings for Inang Bayan. No, we will always be "P.I." (the old colonial name, Philippine Islands, although sometimes it also refers to the expletive)–distant, primitive, corrupt—to many Filipino-Americans.

I'm hopeful about change. I see young Filipino-Americans (and an occasional Filipino-Canadian) coming here to study, genuinely interested in unearthing their roots. I think of Alvin Cabrera, born and raised in the States but who, as early as high school, volunteered to join a medical mission to Bicol's hinterlands, and who returned last year, fresh out of Harvard. On a Fulbright scholarship, he looked into the situation of Filipinos living with HIV. He's now in medical school at the University of California.

Someday, young people like Alvin will find ways to contribute to the Philippines. Most of them will do this without dual citizenship, retaining their American or Canadian passports but more conscious now, and proud, of their being ethnic Filipinos.

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No two ways about a copyright

I DISAGREE with Conrado de Quiros' position calling for the authorities not to strictly enforce copyright laws.

What was he thinking? A decent nation should play by the rules. The last time I checked, we were a signatory to a bunch of intellectual property rights accord worldwide. We should enforce these laws.

Just because piracy is rampant in the Philippines doesn't mean that the authorities should give up chasing those who make millions by copying and distributing recordings illegally.

Need we be reminded that the copyright law is there to protect artists and writers from unauthorized use of their work? The copyright law provides an incentive for people to continue working for the advancement of the arts and sciences.

—REY ROSALES, bomborey@ hotmail

Wireless LAN-extending Internet and networks without the wires

BACK on the road again and raring to cash in on the free time of the office desk. But a presentation is bubbling in the mobile professional's head at the same time the mood to listen to Top 40 music kicks in. No problem. All he needs is a laptop computer and Internet access.

Laptop computer, no problem. Internet access, no problem.

Cables to connect, problem?

No problem.

A not-really-new but rapid spreading technology called wireless LAN (local area network) is capable of handling broadband connectivity to the Internet and networked computers while in public places. As "wireless suggests, it does not restrict Internet and network connections to the presence of cables and sockets, thus extending the areas of Internet access to public spots such as universities and coffee shops.

This means all a user needs is a laptop computer and a wireless LAN card attached to it and he is all ready to check and upload his attachment-loaded e-mail, update his daily reports or access shared files from his company's network, no plugs necessary.

He updates his company's inventory database over coffee without going back to the office and he immediately knows which items are in stock and which are in running low. This makes supply and delivery systems more efficient for this company and more beneficial to the customers he is serving.

Or he is a frequent traveler. He hardly makes contact with his office desk, and his laptop computer is his workspace. Wireless LAN helps him extend productive work hours and get more from the wealth of information on the Internet because mobility does not limit his Internet and network access.

And by the way, he is also able to download his favorite MP3s or watch a streaming broadcast of his favorite NBA team sweeping the scoreboards. Not only he get quality work done, he also gets quality high-bandwidth entertainment.

The wireless LAN technology operates on the 802.11b specification developed by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), more commonly known as Wi-Fi (wireless fidelity), which offers a 2Mbps maximum bandwidth range and provides data rates of up to 11 Mbps. This enables the user to download web pages in an instant, watch streaming videos and enjoy the benefits of having broadband Internet access minus the complications of jack and ports.

Wireless LAN is gaining popularity in Asian cosmopolitan hubs, and the Philippines is catching on. Wireless LAN is fast becoming lifestyle necessity of the mobile professional, Filipino mobile professionals included.

BLINK
be linked to the internet, without wires.

ePLDT, the information and communications technology company of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company is pilot testing this wireless LAN technology in the Philippines with exclusive partner of Cisco Systems, the world's leading networking technology company.

ePLDT and Cisco have identified certain public areas called "hotspots" for the pilot deployment of Blink™, ePLDT's wireless LAN solution from Cisco's Mobile Office Program such as hotels, resorts, convention centers, cafes, universities, airports.

ePLDT will launch Blink™ very soon in these "hotspots," aiming to service the needs of mobile professionals to improve their lifestyles, to stay connected and update in the face of fast and demanding business and social trends.

ePLDT Blink™ is brewing the next exciting episode. What's the next scene to watch out for? Corporate data with coffee. In a blink.

For more information, visit the ePLDT website at www.epldt.com or send an e-mail to info@epldt.com.

ADVT.

Edsa Shrine reserved for prayers

WE, the members of the Edsa Shrine Rector's Council, representing 23 ministries composed of children, youth, urban poor, young professionals, and teaching, social service, and prayer communities with over 600 members, support the ban on political rallies at the Edsa Shrine.

We strongly support the decision of Jaime Cardinal L. Sin and Bishop Socrates B. Villegas, our rector, to prevent any group from holding political rallies at the Edsa Shrine and to reserve the shrine solely for prayer and other spiritual activities.

The sad experience at the Edsa Shrine in April 2001—the noise, litter and threats—disturbed the sanctity of the Shrine and we thus firmly resolved never again to allow the desecration of the Edsa Shrine. After the noise had died down and the litter had been cleaned up, the Edsa Shrine Community continued to pray and kept vigil to beg God's forgiveness for we felt responsible for not doing enough to prevent its desecration.

The Edsa Shrine is holy ground and we would like to protect and keep it a sacred ground because of two miracles—the peaceful People Power of February 1986 and January 2001—which took place there, with the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is a church where people from all walks of life can seek refuge, a place of solace and peace, an environment conducive to prayer, an atmosphere of silence for reflection, and a home away from home.

Many of us, witnesses to the growth of the Edsa Shrine Community into an active Catholic community of servant leaders since its consecration in 1989, would like to extend our arms to our brothers and sisters and to share with them the spirit of Edsa through prayer and outreach activities for the last, the least and the lost.

We are confident that we will draw more people closer to Our Lady, Queen of Peace (Our Lady of Edsa), and to her beloved Son Jesus through our prayers and sacrifices. We hope that others will likewise be vigilant in preserving the Edsa Shrine as a house of prayer and spiritual activities.

We reiterate our support and commitment to Cardinal Sin and Bishop Villegas in their stand to use the Edsa Shrine only for prayer and spiritual activities, which we believe are more pleasing to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary than any political activity.

—WITH 23 SIGNATORIES

Aglipay deserves support

WE fully support the program of Police Director Edgar Aglipay to transfer the "less committed cops" of Metro Manila to the provinces or to other assignments. We agree that it is the prerogative and discretion of the commander to reassign his men to improve the police service to Metro Manila residents. But although the Philippine National Police may be civilian in character, rules and regulations as well as disciplinary actions from superior officers should be followed to ensure the integrity of the chain of command. The small number of policemen complaining about the transfers have no place in the police service. If they cannot follow regulations and lawful orders of their commander, they should resign.

We believe that Aglipay's motive in undertaking these actions is to improve the service and discipline among the policemen in the National Capital Region. If we want more professionalism in the police ranks, the public should support Aglipay and other officers like him who are instituting badly needed changes in our police force.

—TITA PILAPIL REVERENTE and LAGRIMAS L. GALANG, Community Policing Advocacy Group, 4 Mariposa, Quezon City

US must be ready to use nukes–Rice

WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush's top foreign-affairs advisers say the United States must be prepared to use nuclear weapons to deter attacks involving weapons of mass destruction. But in an effort to ease alarm overseas, they said there were no plans to do so.

"We all want to make the use of weapons of mass destruction less likely," national security adviser Condoleezza Rice said Sunday. "The way that you do that is to send a very strong signal to anyone who might try to use weapons of mass destruction against the United States that they'd be met with a devastating response."

Secretary of State Colin Powell said the United States has never ruled out using nuclear weapons against a nuclear-armed enemy, a policy he said should deter any would-be attacker.

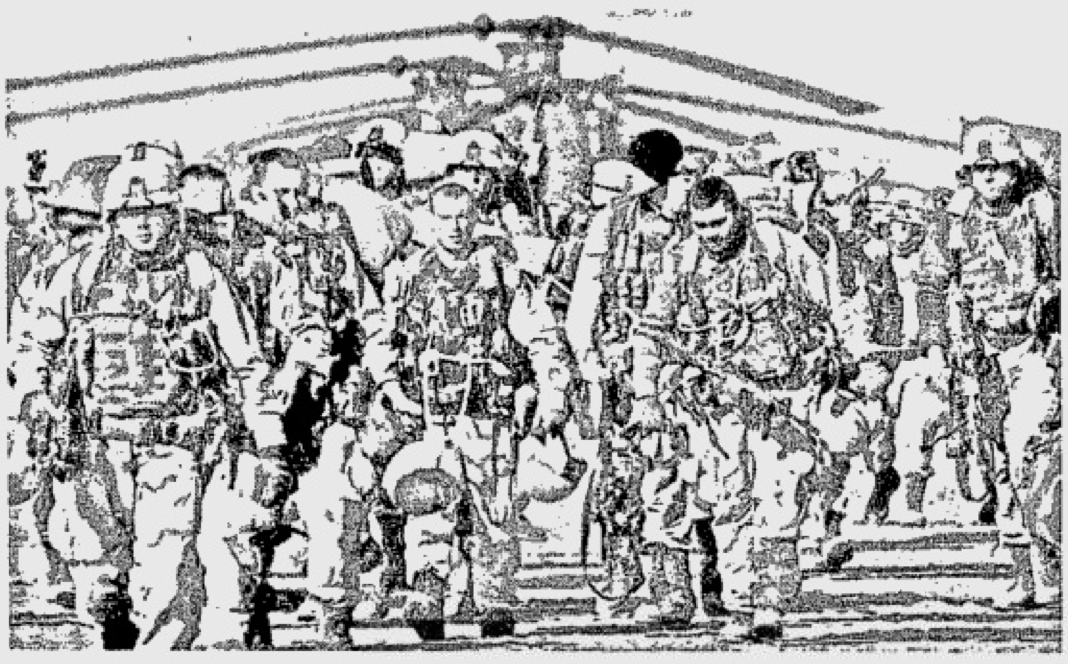
"We think it is best for any potential adversary out there to have uncertainty in his calculus," Powell said.

Rice, Powell and military and congressional leaders were responding to weekend reports that the Pentagon has told Congress it is studying the possible use of nuclear weapons against countries that threaten the United States.

The classified "nuclear posture review" sent to Congress says the Pentagon is developing contingency plans for using nuclear weapons against countries that are developing weapons of mass destruction.

The report identified seven nations: China, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Russia and Syria.

On TV talk shows Sunday, administration officials sought to walk a line between asserting America's willingness to use nuclear weapons, and calming the public and allies troubled by suggestions the United States might be moving closer to employing them. **AP**



US ARMY soldiers from the 101 Airborne in full battle gear return to Bagram airbase March 10 from the battle in the Shahi Kot mountains in eastern Afghanistan. Some 400 US soldiers were lifted by Chinook helicopters back to Bagram after spending a week in the fiercest battle of the war in Afghanistan. REUTERS

US troops pull out after 8-day battle

BAGRAM, Afghanistan—Hundreds of weary US soldiers descended from the Afghan mountains after a grueling eight-day battle against enemy holdouts. US bombers pounded the caves where the remaining fighters were hiding.

The Army said ground fighting was winding down, but that "Operation Anaconda" would continue until the last of the al-Qaida and Taliban fighters had been killed or surrendered in the Shah-e-Kot mountains.

Maj. Bryan Hilferty, the 10th Mountain Division spokesperson, told reporters at Bagram on Sunday that "the major fighting of the battle is over."

However, Gen. Tommy Franks, the commander of the war, disagreed with that assessment. Speaking on ABC television's "This Week," Franks said that while some US troops have been moved out of the battle area, others would take their places.

"I don't know that I could characterize it as winding down," he said.

Operation Anaconda was launched March 2 to crush al-Qaida and Taliban forces in the mountains of Paktia province. US officials said the operation would continue until the last of the enemy troops surrendered or died.

In the town of Gardez, an Afghan commander, Ismail, said al-Qaida and Taliban forces in the area were "75 percent spent," and he expected a final push within the next two days.

Coalition forces said they killed at least 500 fighters and that about 200 were believed left. Eight Americans and three of their Afghan allies died.

Ismail said American officers told him to wait for more bombing to soften up the last of the enemy forces. Late Sunday, the roar of US jets and the distant thud of explosions could be heard from the battle area.

"They were defeated by these bombs," Ismail said of the al-Qaida and Taliban foes.

Ismail said that in the past two days, Australian commandos and vehicles had been dropped into the battle area, presumably to search for small pockets of al-Qaida members who might try to slip away through narrow gorges. **AP**

Wife says Bin Laden feared Omar betrayal

CAIRO—Osama bin Laden moved his family to a safe house in a remote corner of Afghanistan days before the Sept. 11 attacks on the United States, one of his four wives said in remarks published Sunday.

In a wide-ranging interview with the Saudi magazine Al-Majalla, the wife spoke about her life with America's No. 1 enemy, saying he took tranquilizers, suffered from kidney ailments, and became enraged when she asked him who was behind the bombings of the US embassies in East Africa in 1998.

The wife, who spoke on condition that she be identified only by the initials A.S., said she believed Bin Laden is alive although she has no proof.

"I feel inside me that he is still alive and, if he were dead, the whole world would know because the death of Osama cannot be concealed," she said.

The wife revealed that Bin Laden had disagreements with Mullah Mohammed Omar, the leader of the Taliban regime that hosted him in Afghanistan, and feared the Taliban would betray him to the United States.

The magazine did not say where or when the interview was conducted. The magazine published a photograph of the wife's identity card—issued by an unidentified Arab state—but with her photograph and essential details blurred.

She said the last time she saw Bin Laden was at their home in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar before the Sept. 11 terror attacks on New York and Washington.

"He came home and gave me a telephone and asked to me to speak to my mother and tell her that we are going to another place and I will be out of touch for a long time," the wife said. **AP**

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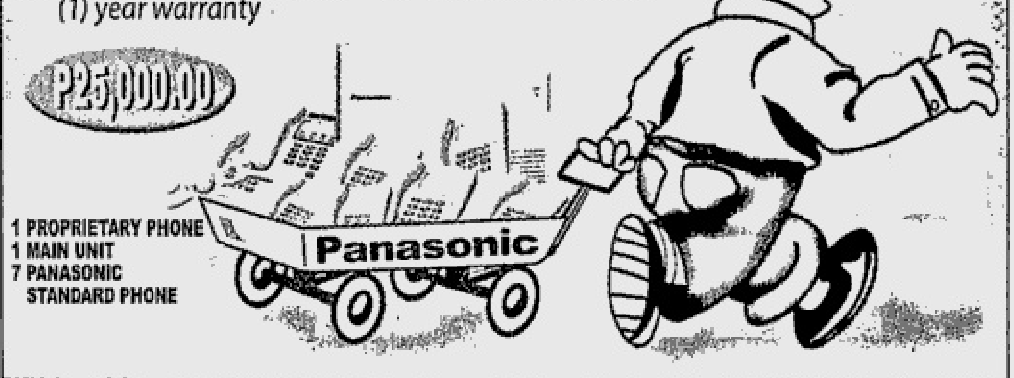

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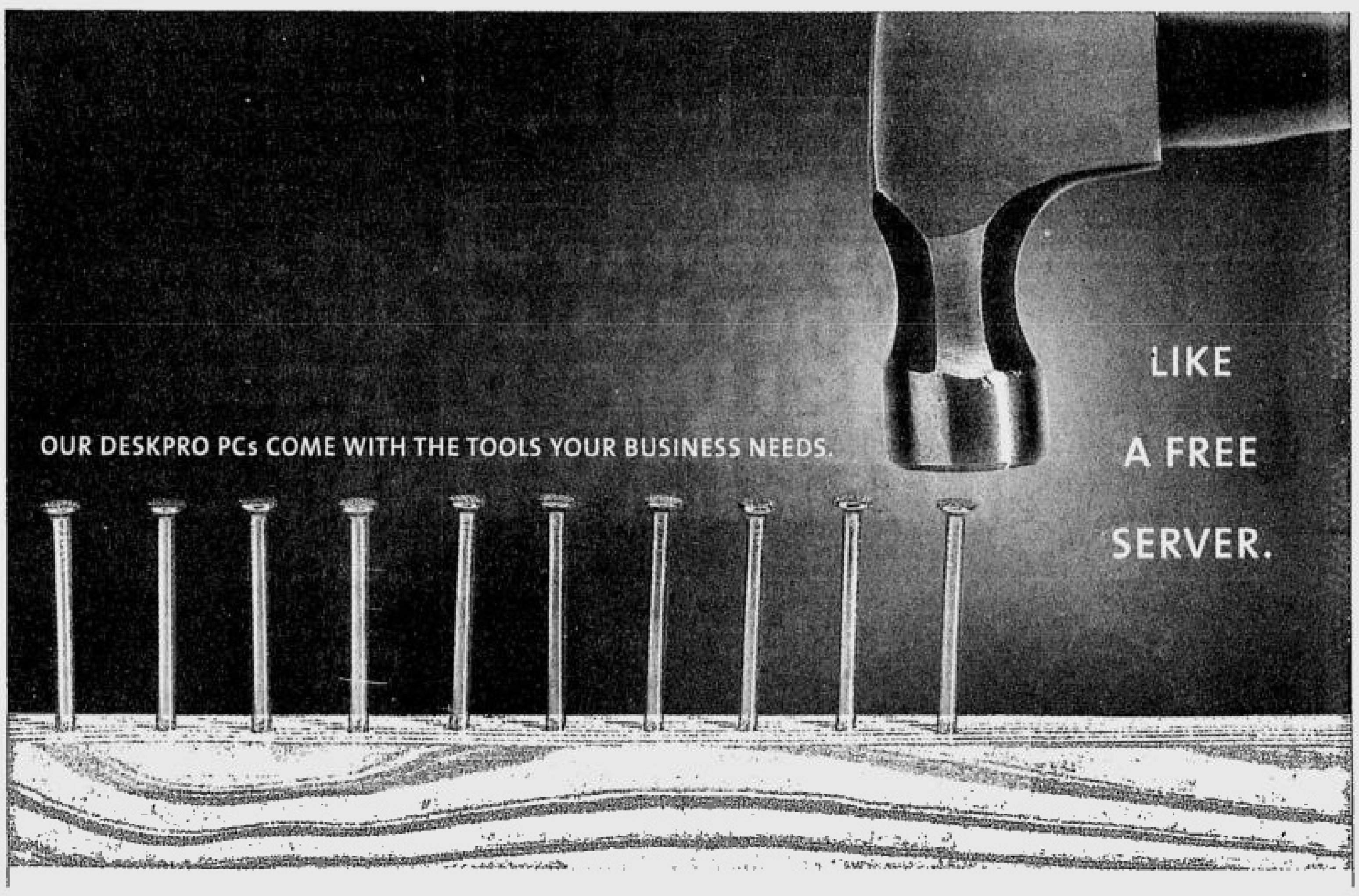

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5 more Palestinians killed after bombing of Arafat HQ

JERUSALEM—Five Palestinians were killed Sunday in four separate incidents in the West Bank and Gaza, following the destruction of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's official headquarters in Gaza City.

There was also a reminder of two devastating Palestinian attacks the day before when a Palestinian gunman seriously wounded an Israeli boy in a southern city, but was arrested before being able to fire any more rounds.

Two Palestinians died when their car exploded in the Palestinian village of Jabal Muakkabir at the entrance of east Jerusalem, Israeli police said.

Israeli public radio said the two men might have been killed by the accidental explosion of a device to be used in an anti-Israeli attack.

However, a Palestinian witness from the nearby West Bank area of Bethlehem said he saw an Israeli helicopter fire on the vehicle.

The explosion took place near an Israeli Army base, on the road between Jabal Muakkabir and the neighboring village of Wadi Homus.

A 16-year-old was shot dead as he was throwing stones at Israeli troops near Nablus, hospital officials said.

Mahmud Ganem was with a group of Palestinians hurling stones at troops in the village of Surra, west of Nablus, the sources added, without saying if anyone else had been hurt.

Another Palestinian was killed when Israeli soldiers opened fire on him at a West Bank roadblock near the northern entrance to Jerusalem, Israeli public television said.

The man was carrying grenades, according to the television, which aired footage of the scene and the body.

Police sources had earlier reported that a Palestinian who had refused to stop at the Ekkam checkpoint, north of Jerusalem, had been "very seriously injured" by Israeli fire.

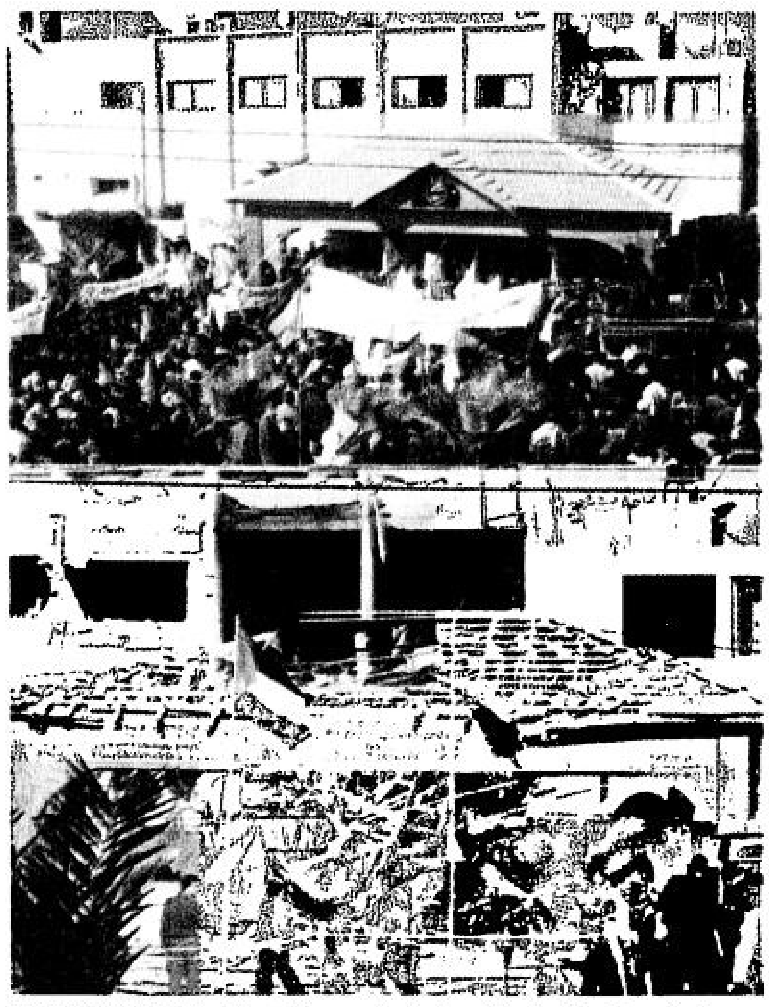
Earlier Sunday a Palestinian was killed in the Gaza Strip after wounding two Israelis, Israeli public television reported.

The Palestinian, a worker at the Jewish settlement of Netzarim who had hidden a pistol in his clothing, fired on a soldier at the entrance to the settlement, seriously wounding him, the report said.

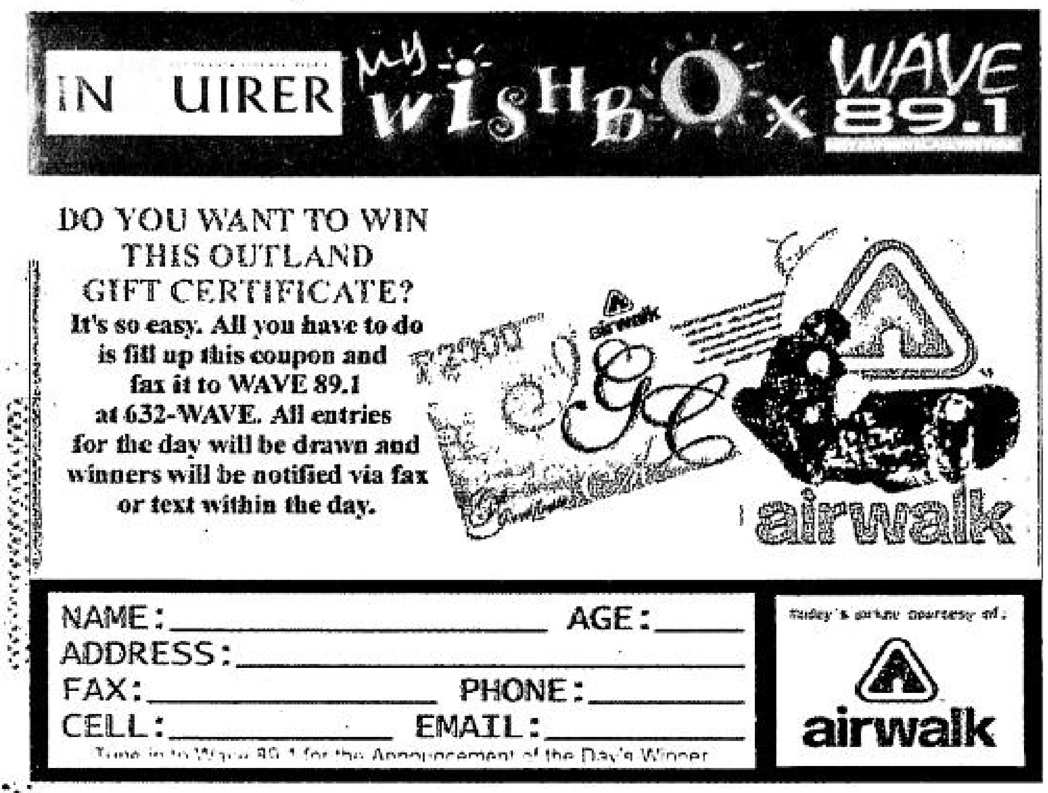
The attacker was then killed by an armed settler, who in turn suffered serious knife wounds. The report said the two injured were taken by helicopter to hospital.

Sunday's deaths brought the overall toll in the intifada, or Palestinian uprising which broke out more than 17 months ago, to 1,468, including 1,112 Palestinians and 332 Israelis.

Late Sunday, a 13-year-old Israeli boy was badly wounded in the southern city of Ashdod when a Palestinian gunman opened fire on a banquet hall in an ulta-Orthodox neighborhood, Israeli military radio said. *AFP*



PALESTINIAN President Yasser Arafat's office in the Gaza Strip Jan. 24 (top) and following Israeli air strikes March 10. Israel retaliated for a Palestinian suicide bombing that killed 11 Israelis in a Jerusalem café by destroying the Gaza headquarters that Yasser Arafat used as a showcase for Palestinian sovereignty. REUTERS



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Chirac, Jospin battle in bitter campaign

PARIS—French President Jacques Chirac sought to play up his statesman's credentials on Monday, belittling the aggressiveness of Prime Minister Lionel Jospin in an increasingly nasty presidential election campaign.

The move came after Jospin, a Socialist seeking to unseat Chirac, said he found the 69-year-old conservative president "tired, ageing, worn down and marked by passiveness."

Speaking to reporters at the weekend on the way back from a brief campaign trip to the French-ruled Indian Ocean island of La Reunion, 64-year-old Jospin said Chirac had "lost a lot of his energy and his drive."

The two men, who have ruled in an awkward "cohabitation" system of government since 1997, are locked in a close battle for the presidency with polls showing Jospin has a slight edge ahead of the two-round vote in April and May.

The campaign has taken on an increasingly cut-throat tone in recent days, with Jospin also urging voters not to let Chirac "abuse" them again by electing him for a second term.

In a veiled attack on Jospin, Chirac urged candidates for the presidency to keep the campaign clean. *Reuters*

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FLASHPOINT HOLY SITE

Muslims reject compromise deal on India temple

NEW DELHI—An influential Muslim group has rejected a compromise aimed at soothing tensions over Hindu plans to build a temple at the disputed site of a demolished Muslim mosque in northern India.

The rejection leaves the volatile issue in the hands of India's Supreme Court.

The All India Muslim Law Board on Sunday dismissed as "incomplete" a compromise proposal by one of the nation's top Hindu clerics. The deal would have let Hindus hold prayers next to the ruins of the 16th-century mosque, which was razed by Hindu hardliners in 1992.

Muslim leaders fear that Hindu hardliners will press ahead with construction of the temple if they're allowed to hold prayers near the disputed site.

Both sides consider the site holy. Hindus say it's the birthplace of their god Rama.

A Muslim mob earlier this month attacked a train carrying Hindu devotees from the disputed site, sparking religious riots that killed more than 700 people.

The proposed compromise "has offered nothing to the Muslims," said Muslim law board spokesperson Yusuf Muchala after a daylong meeting Sunday in the capital.

Hindu hardliners had initially threatened to begin building the temple by March 15. Later they agreed to accept a Supreme Court verdict on the site, following mediation by the Shankaracharya of Kanchi Jayendra Saraswathi, a top Hindu cleric who made the compromise proposal.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee urged Hindu and Muslim leaders to settle the dispute amicably.

In statement issued Sunday, Vajpayee said fundamentalist Hindus leading the temple-building project had made a significant concession by agreeing to accept the verdict of India's top court.

Hindu groups already have constructed hundreds of stone pillars and statues of gods and goddesses for the temple and stacked them near the site in the town of Ayodhya. **AP**

Mob torches Muslim homes

AHMEDABAD, India—Two people were killed and six injured when police fired at a mob torching Muslim homes in a fresh outbreak of religious violence in western India where 700 people have died in recent clashes.

A curfew was imposed in the village of Panvad, some 100 km from Gujarat state's main city of Ahmedabad, after Sunday night's violence, police said.

"We had to open fire to disperse a mob which was trying to set houses on fire. Two Hindu tribesmen were killed and six injured and around 30 to 40 houses of Muslims burnt," police official Naval Singh said by telephone on Monday.

He said all was quiet on Monday.

Ismail Soni, a teacher in Panvad, said about 800 to 1,000 Muslims living in the village had fled the violence that started on Sunday afternoon.

"The mob attacked, looted and burnt Muslim houses, shops and vehicles. All the Muslims of the village have fled," Soni said by phone from Baroda city.

Soni said he feared the mob would burn down the 60 to 70 Muslim houses that were unharmed in Sunday's violence if police did not step up security.

More than 700 people have died in Gujarat, the country's second-most industrialized state, since a train carrying Hindu devotees from the northern town of Ayodhya was set ablaze by a Muslim mob last month. *Reuters*

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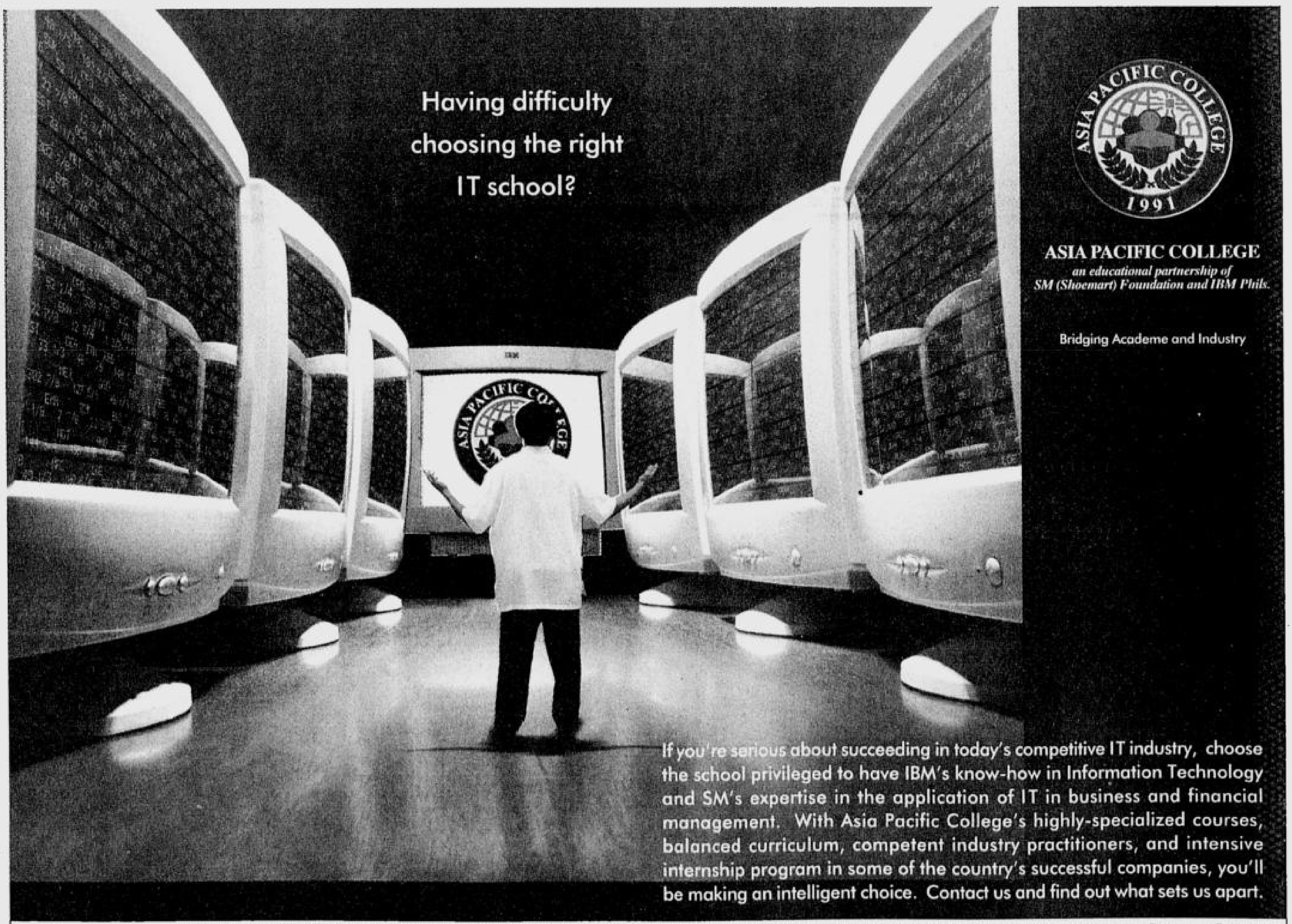
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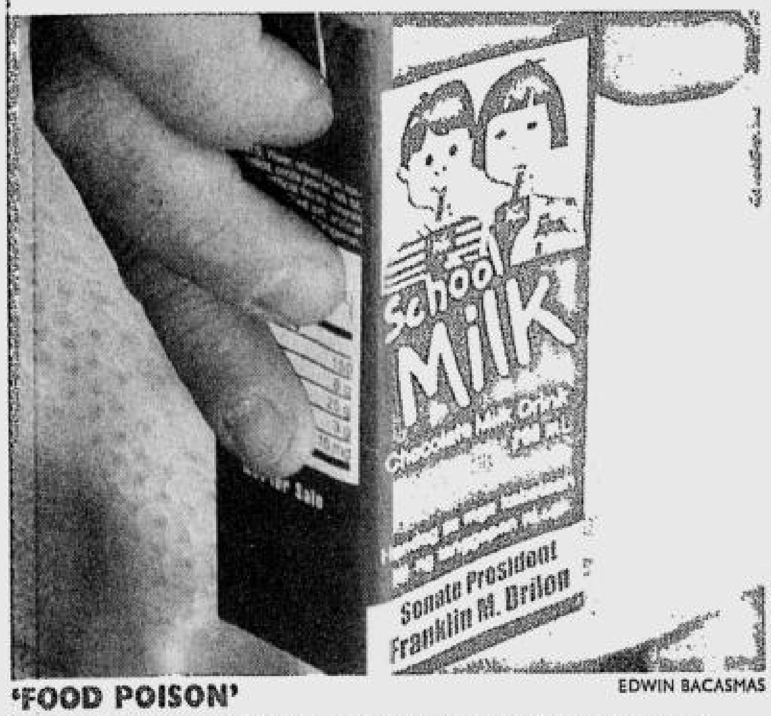
Drilon milk downs 170 pupils in Pampanga town



EDWIN BACASMAS

'FOOD POISON'
This box contained chocolate milk that downed more than a hundred pupils in Pampanga.

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—More than 170 students in three elementary schools in Minalin town were treated for symptoms of food poisoning yesterday after drinking chocolate milk provided them under a feeding program of the Department of Education.

DepEd officials in Pampanga said the students suffered from abdominal pains, drowsiness, weakness, and vomiting.

The feeding program was administered at 10 a.m. Monday to Grade 1 to Grade 6 pupils in the schools.

The program, which was being funded by the Office of the Senate President, provides free milk to Grade 1 pupils throughout the country to ease the malnutrition problem among poor children.

Reports reaching the Senate said that Central Luzon health officials were still investigating whether it was the milk that was given to the pupils that caused the food poisoning.

Priscilla Dizon, nutrition supervisor of the Pampanga schools division, said the principals of Sto. Domingo Elementary School, San Isidro Elementary School and Lourdes Elementary School decided to send all their students who drank the milk to the Jose Lingad Memorial Regional Hospital here for medical checkup.

Dizon said doctors examined 300 students from the Sto. Domingo Elementary School, 166 students from the San Isidro Elementary School and 624 students from the Lourdes Elementary School.

She said only 179 students were treated at the hospital.

Dizon said 530 students from the Sta. Rita Elementary School who were given the same milk were examined at the barangay health center.

As of 4 p.m., all the 40 students who were earlier placed under observation were already released from the JBL regional hospital in San Fernando, Pampanga.

"The situation is under control and there is no need to panic," Dizon told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

She said the milk served to the students was not stale. Samples of the milk were submitted to the Bureau of Food and Drugs for examination.

The chocolate milk shipment was delivered to the DepEd office in the province on March 4 and was immediately distributed to the elementary schools.

Senate President Franklin Drilon said a report from Thelma Santos, director of the Health and Nutrition Council of the Department of Education, that there was no serious case of food poisoning, much less deaths.

Elita Umali, DECS-Pampanga superintendent, relayed the report of Santos to Drilon's office.

Drilon said this was the first incident of food poisoning in the six years that the program has been going on.

He said it was the DECS that implements the program. The milk supply was bidded out and won by Alaska Milk Corporation.

"I have instructed my staff to coordinate closely with the health authorities in the province to ensure that the school children are given immediate medical attention," he said.

Dizon said as a precautionary measure, the DepEd has stopped all feeding programs in Pampanga's elementary schools until they finish their investigation.

Dizon said children who drank the milk in various elementary schools in the City of San Fernando and in Porac town did not show the symptoms the schoolchildren from Minalin experienced.

She said Education Secretary Raul Roco has been informed about the incident and the DepEd will shoulder the hospital bills of the students.

Sto. Domingo Elementary School officials suspended classes after their pupils suffered abdominal pains, drowsiness, weakness and vomiting.

Edilberto Guerrero, a Grade 4 teacher, said the DepEd division office provided the chocolate milk to the schoolchildren starting Tuesday last week as part of the government's supplemental feeding program.

Benalfre Galang, provincial administrator, said they sent ambulances and paramedic teams to various district hospitals in Pampanga to give the pupils immediate medical treatment.

June Anne Bondoc, a Grade 6 pupil who was among those taken to the hospital, said the chocolate milk was sour. After a while, she said some of her schoolmates started vomiting while she suffered abdominal pains.

The chocolate drink was contained in a blue tetra pack with the mark "Handog sa Kabataan." The milk's expiry date is October 2002. ***Bert Basa, PDI Central Luzon Desk and Cynthia D. Balana***

GMA urged help to coco farmers

LUCENA CITY—Quezon officials have called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to immediately formulate a financial assistance scheme for coconut farmers to tide them over until the courts resolve the controversy over the multibillion-peso coconut levy fund.

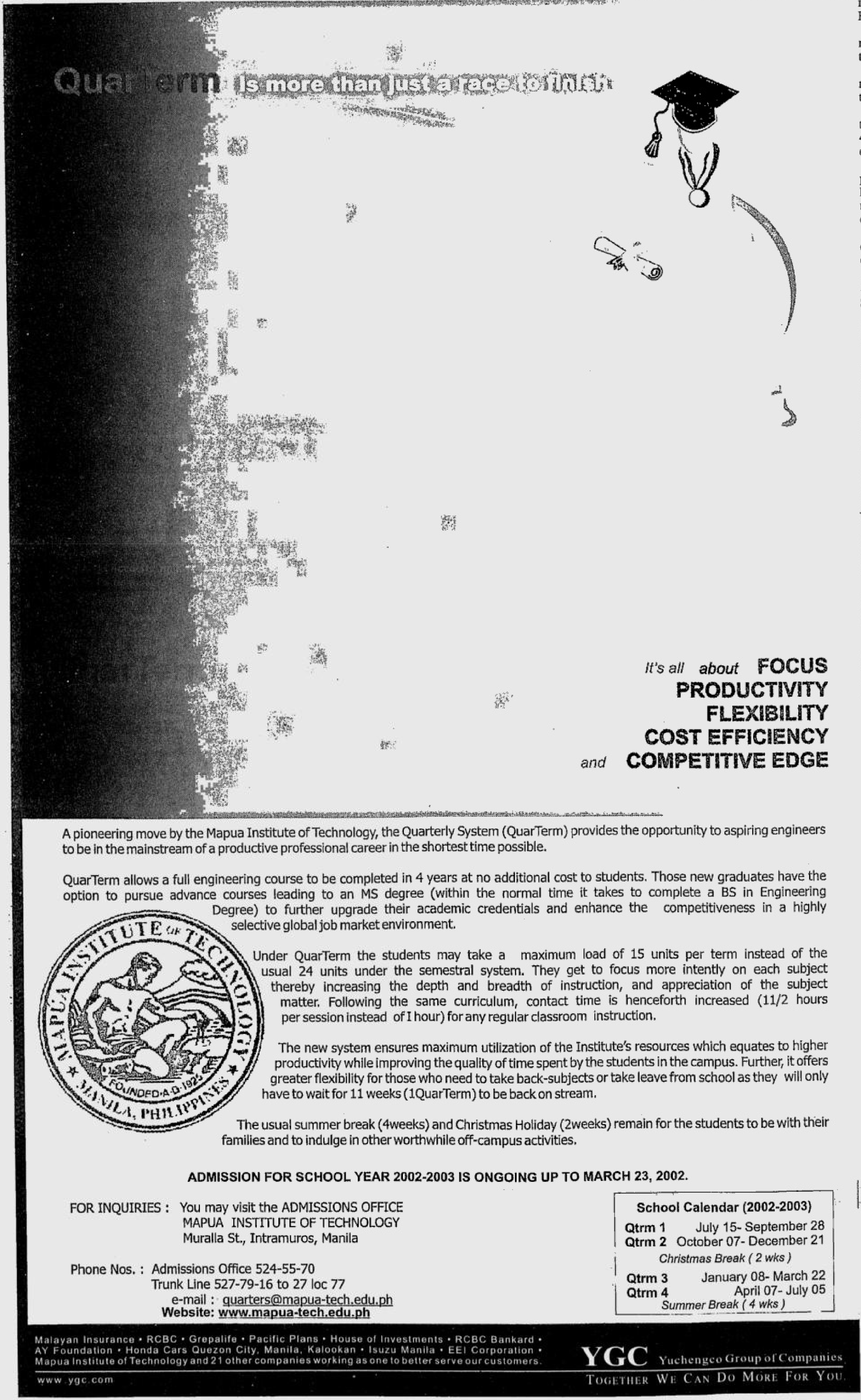
Quezon Rep. Rafael Nantes said that with the recent Supreme Court affirmation that the coconut levy, estimated to be worth P130 billion now, is "prima facie" public fund, the government should now immediately prepare a rehabilitation program for suffering coconut farmers.

"The coconut farmers have suffered for so long. It's time for the government to correct the injustice by offering them financial aid during these uncertain times until the levy issue has been settled," Nantes told the INQUIRER.

During a provincial council session yesterday, board member Hernando Avellaneda, in a resolution addressed to Malacañang, proposed the forming of a "micro-financing development assistance" for coconut farmers.

He said the seed money would be taken from the accumulated interest of the "legally unattached" portion of the coconut levy.

Avellaneda proposed that all the towns in the province get at least P10 million each to create farmers' cooperatives. ***Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau***



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Skin disease blamed on Army bombs just scabies, say docs

GOVERNMENT soldiers continue the hunt for Abu Sayyaf bandits despite allegations, including those in a report that Army bombs caused skin diseases, that the operation had led to civilians getting harmed. DENNIS SABANGAN

ZAMBOANGA CITY—The Western Mindanao regional health office said the skin disease that affected some residents of Basilan was a case of scabies.

However, Lourdes Labiano, regional health director, said only a dozen or so residents were afflicted with scabies and there has been no outbreak contrary to earlier reports.

"That is not true. In fact we regularly send a team there, and as far as their investigation is concerned, there were only 12 cases monitored, recorded and documented since last year," Labiano told the INQUIRER.

Earlier, Huda Lim, medical specialist for the Basilan General Hospital, said the skin diseases was of unknown origin and have affected a large number of residents, mostly children.

Lim talked to the INQUIRER and the New York Times about the "unknown skin disease."

She said the skin disease was already monitored in Sumisip, Maluso and Tuburan towns as early as two years ago.

"We don't know the real cause of this skin disease, but we suspect that it has something to do with the military's bombardment (in these areas) two years ago," Lim said.

From March to May 2000, the military aircraft pounded Mt. Mahadji near the said towns with bombs after the Abu Sayyaf took more than 70 school children and Claretian priest Fr. Rhoel Gallardo.

Dr. Reiner Mon, resident physician of the Basilan General Hospital, contradicted Lim's theory and blamed the unhygienic practices of the local folk, "especially in places where potable water is really scarce or none at all" for the skin diseases.

Mon said that he already noted several cases of scabies when he joined the military-initiated civic action and medical outreach program in several barangays of the three towns.

But Elisa del Puerto, provincial coordinator of the Christian Children Fund, said based on their monitoring, "more than 50 to 80 percent of the children in Tumahubong alone" were suffering from the skin disease.

The CCF attends to the health needs of Basilan folk and maintains health centers in all seven towns of Basilan.

Del Puerto also challenged the health department for downplaying the number of affected residents.

She was willing to accompany health officials "to see for themselves the actual and real situation." ***Julie S. Alipala, PDI Mindanao Bureau***

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Cancer-stricken rural bank owner stirs up action vs smoking

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—A lung cancer-stricken rural banker, who is on his third of a six-course chemotherapy session, is gaining support for his crusade to stop smoking in public places.

Politicians, doctors, students and environment watch groups have gravitated toward Rodolfo Yap, 59, after he complained about the unabated smoking in malls, jeepneys and other public places.

"If I can convince at least one person every day to stop smoking, I would be happy. It is a legacy I would like to leave behind," said Yap.

Yap did not expect to start a community action to stop smoking when he wrote the management of SM City Iloilo mall on Feb. 23, complaining about smoking in coffee shops located near the entrances of the mall and at the lobby of the cinema.

As a regular visitor who does leisurely shopping and walking, Yap said the mall reeks of "noxious odor and cigarette coming from smokers drinking coffee."

Smoking areas

Yap asked the mall to provide smokers an enclosed area where they can enjoy their own smoke without polluting the rest of the mall.

He said he believed that nine of every 20 shoppers are nonsmokers "since smoking has become less and less popular nowadays."

"Please do something to stop the pollution in your mall before it is too late for people like me who are presently undergoing a very expensive chemotherapy for lung cancer despite my being a non-smoker," Yap wrote.

A course in chemotherapy every three weeks costs Yap P85,000.

"I am not asking for a donation," Yap said in a letter to Iloilo City Vice Mayor Victor Facultad on Feb. 24.

"All I ask is that you help me through legislation by revising, updating, and strictly implementing the ordinance prohibiting smoking in public places."

The management of SM City Iloilo recently called owners of five coffee shops to a meeting after receiving Yap's letter. The owners plan to buy devices to absorb cigarette smoke.

Cherry Amor Ledda, marketing manager of Bean Street coffee shop, wrote the mall management on March 3 about their plan to support the campaign to minimize smoking in the mall.

The coffee shop plans to place table tents reminding their clients of the dangers of smoking.

Smoking mayor

In its session on March 6, the city council took cognizance of Yap's complaint by passing a resolution requesting Mayor Jerry Treñas, himself a smoker, to strictly implement Ordinance 84 that bans smoking in public places including public vehicles.

The resolution, authored by Julienne Baronda, Sangguniang Kabataan representative, had enclosed Yap's letter to the SM management and to Facultad.

Yap said he was buoyed up by the support of students of the Central Philippine University and doctors affiliated with the Iloilo Medical Society.

Yap was also able to convince some of his friends at the Rotary Club and the Knights of Columbus either to stop smoking or join the no-smoking pitch.

But he clarified that the anti-smoking campaign does not single out SM because other malls—Gaisano City, Robinsons Place, and the Atrium—share the same problem.

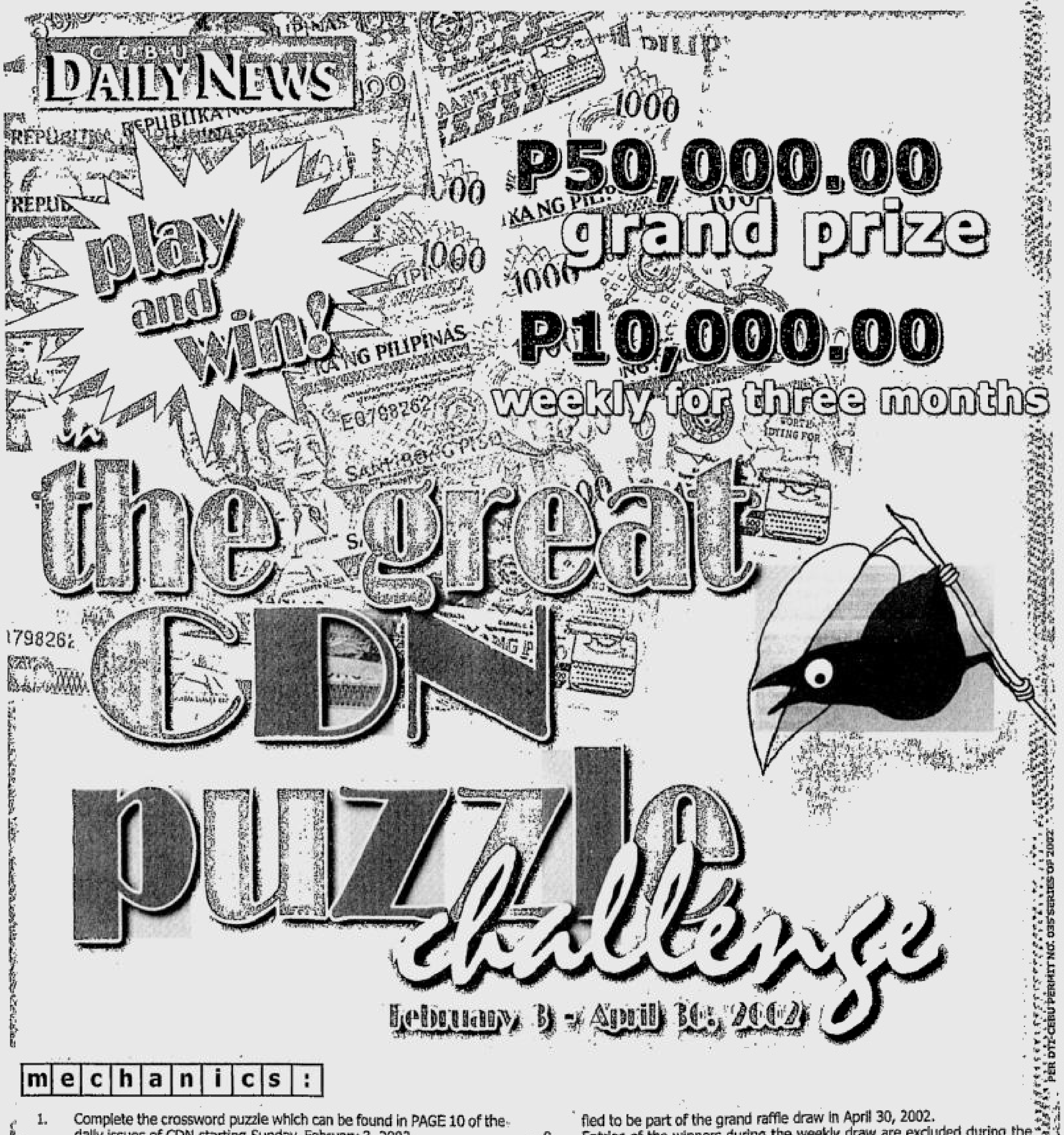
Yap was vice president of Land Bank Iloilo when he decided to retire early in 1996 to set up his own rural bank. But his plans of expanding the First Midland Rural Bank at New Lucena town, 28 kilometers north of here, was cut short when he discovered last year that he had lung cancer.

Passive smoke

The disease was caused by passive smoke, or by inhaling other people's cigarette smoke, in his workplace.

Yap said he made major changes in his life, among them putting on hold his banking business, to concentrate on his campaign to stop cigarette smoking in all malls and enclosed places.

"I don't know how much time is left to me. I believe, however, that God will guide me to enjoy their remaining time breathing clean air with my children and grandchildren," he said.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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern and Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms especially on the Eastern section. The rest of the country will be party cloudy.

source: pagasa

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Hi31° Lo 19°
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Hi 23° Lo 11°
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 26° Lo 19°
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 19°
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Hi 32° Lo 19°
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 18°
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Hi 31° Lo 20°
Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 23°
Roxas	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 29° Lo 26°
Cebu	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 24°
Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 31° Lo 24°
Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 35° Lo 23°
Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 33° Lo 23°
Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 30° Lo 23°
Davao	Cloudy with Rains	Hi 32° Lo 24°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research/03/12/02

ROUNDUP

Soldier slain in Davao

DAVAO CITY—Suspected New People's Army rebels shot and killed an Army sergeant inside a dental clinic in Panabo City, Davao del Norte, on Saturday. Sgt. Elvis Casidsid, a member of the 73rd Infantry Battalion, was reportedly waiting for his turn inside the Sabuga dental clinic when three armed men appeared from behind and shot him in the head and body. Casidsid died on the spot.

Anthony S. Allada, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Under new supervision

SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ—The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), an agency attached to the Department of Agriculture, has been placed under the supervision of the Office of the President. Executive Order No. 76, which guided the transfer, said the move was for "closer administrative supervision." Under its expanded mandate, the Philrice will be the primary agency for the government's hybrid rice program.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Talugtog has new mayor

CABANATUAN CITY—A regional trial court in Nueva Ecija has unseated the mayor of Talugtog town and declared his rival in last year's elections as the new mayor. In his 141-page decision, Judge Napoleon Sta. Romana unseated Mayor Pacifico Monta and proclaimed Alfredo Leybag as the duly elected mayor of Talugtog. Sta. Romana said that after the recounting of votes cast in the town's 52 precincts, Leybag had 2,638 votes while Monta had 2,568. In the decision, the court cited various instances of vote shaving and padding "perpetrated by the various chairmen of the different boards of election inspectors" in Talugtog in favor of Monta.

Anselmo Roque, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Warning vs fixers

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—The new chief of the Department of Foreign Affairs' regional consular office here has warned the public against dealing with fixers who charge up to P1,500 for passports. Elmer Cato, consular office chief, said fixers have been victimizing some 800 passport applicants daily at the DFA regional consular office here. He said a passport applicant should pay only P500 for a five-day processing of his passport or P650 if he wants it released in three days. Cato also advised the public not to buy passport application forms from fixers because these are free.

Jun Malig, PDI Central Luzon Desk

New Mindoro press club

CALAPAN CITY—Some 30 representatives of different local newspapers, radio stations and television networks here have formed the Provincial Capitol Press Corps (PCPC) "to (have) systematic and organized media relations" with the provincial government. Provincial information officer Orlando A. Maliwanag said media men believe that the PCPC is one way of making sure that the provincial government deals with only legitimate, credible and responsible journalists. Members of the press corps also expressed hope that they will get fast reports about events in the provincial government.

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Solving insurgency

CALAPAN CITY—The delivery of public service will solve the insurgency problem, which slows down development, said Lt. Col. Roque Calagui of the Philippine Army during a recent Provincial Peace and Order Council meeting here. "These armed groups are all Filipinos. We no longer want them to be fighting through violent means," Calagui said. What is needed is the effective implementation of the Community Public Safety Plan.

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Peaceful Mindoro

CALAPAN CITY—Chief Insp. Marcelino Romero of the Oriental Mindoro police office said the province was generally peaceful in the first two months of the year. Romero said their office solved 36 of 39 crimes reported to the police. He added that 39 people were arrested for banned drugs in 67 barangays. "Some 174 pushers and 113 users are on the PNP Drug Watch List," the police official said. Sixteen cases have been filed in court.

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

GMA helps Mindoro women

CALAPAN CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo has extended financial support to women's groups in the province through the Oriental Mindoro Women's Financing Program. Secretary Marita Magpili-Jimenez of the Office of the Presidential Adviser for the Official Development Assistance, said the President wants to strengthen the economic power of women and give them an important part in national development. Among the groups that represented the women were Kilos Bagong Mindoreñan of the Provincial Government, Lakas ng Kababaihang Calapeño and Salcedo Women's Development Association.

Donna Virola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Civet bought by soldiers dies in bus to N. Ecija

DUPAX DEL SUR, Nueva Vizcaya—The wild civet cat (*Macrogalidia musshenbroeki*), a species thought to be already extinct, which was bought by an Army soldier here last week died while it was being transported to Nueva Ecija, Army officials said on Friday.

Lt. Col. Felix Calimag, commanding officer of the Army's 54th Infantry Battalion based here, said the wild cat died as Army Cpl. Virgilio Manabat, who bought the animal from local hunters, was bringing it home to San Jose City.

"It's really unfortunate because just as we were to retrieve the cat from Manabat, he informed us that it had died along the way," Calimag said.

He insisted that the cat, known here as *mutit*, was not butchered to become an appetizer (*pulutan*) by soldiers.

"It would be a type of *pulutan* that is very dear," he said. "Besides, we raise chickens here (in the camp) which we can have as *pulutan* if we want to."

Calimag said he was sure that none of his men, who were among those who tried to buy the wild cat and a 10-foot python (*sawa*), were drunk "because my instructions were very clear: I do not allow drinking inside the camp."

The wounded cat, which became the object of a virtual custody battle between soldiers and local reporters, was bought on Feb. 28 for P250 from farmer Ernesto Abangan.

The animal, caught in the forests of Sitio Akkon in Barangay Malasin, Dupax del Norte town, was chanced upon by reporters as it was being bargained off to the soldiers.

After striking a deal with the farmer, Manabat, with the prodding of fellow soldiers, refused to yield to the suggestions of this correspondent that the animal be first turned over to the Department of Environment of Natural Resources.

Manabat reportedly wanted to bring home the cat to have it live among his chickens because of the old belief that the *musang* can drive off evil spirits.

But while in transit, the animal apparently died of suffocation after it was stuffed inside the baggage compartment of a bus that Manabat took on his way home to Nueva Ecija.

It was not made clear what disciplinary actions await Manabat.

"While it is true that 'ignorance of the law excuses no one,' he (Manabat) might not have known that there was such a law (Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act of 2001)," Calimag said.

He urged the DENR to be more aggressive in its information drive over the law, especially in areas where the hunting of wildlife is said to be prevalent.

The *musang* and other exotic animals found in the country's forests are protected by RA 9147, which prohibits the killing, wounding, collection or possession of wildlife, classified as "critical," "endangered" and "threatened."

Violators can face a maximum imprisonment term of 12 years, and a fine of as much as P1 million.

According to Abangan, aside from the *musang*, the forest of Akkon is still home to a number of wild pigs (*baboy damo*), lizards (*bayawak*) and deer. ***Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

A GOVERNMENT anti-narcotics agent sits in the middle of a seven-hectare marijuana plantation in a Benguet village amid 10-feet marijuana plants. Government agents discovered 1.2 million fully grown marijuana plants worth at least P156 million.

San Roque dam workers stage strike

DAGUPAN CITY—Work on the $1.2-billion San Roque multipurpose dam project in San Manuel, Pangasinan, was paralyzed Monday after more than 1;000 construction workers went on strike because of alleged union busting and unfair labor practices by management.

Armando de Guzman, president of the San Roque Employees Independent Union, claimed that the AsiaKon, a manpower subcontractor of dam contractor Raytheon International, tried to bust the union by terminating the services of its seven officers and members.

De Guzman, a bulldozer operator whose contract was among those not renewed by AsiaKon, said the company did not address the union's demand for monetary benefits.

"Workers are required to work during break time but are not compensated," he said.

The strike was the first to be staged by dam workers since the construction started in 1998. The dam, owned by the San Roque Project Corp., is expected to be operational in May next year.

The INQUIRER tried but failed to reach officials of Raytheon International and SRPC for comment. A staff member of Raytheon said the firm's top official was on leave.

The strike was supposed to be staged only by AsiaKon workers but workers of other sub-contractors joined the protest, said De Guzman.

He claimed that some administrative staff in the project site joined the picket lines while others did not report for work. There are more than 4,000 workers at the dam site.

De Guzman said his contract was not renewed when it expired on Feb. 15, even if his services as a bulldozer operator were needed and there was no cause for his termination.

"After four years of employment, I should have been considered a permanent employee, but when the company learned of my connection with the union, I was terminated," he said. ***Yolanda Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

Export firm accuses rebel group of theft, harassment

BACOLOD CITY—An export company has filed a complaint of robbery and grave threats against the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade (RPA-ABB) for allegedly stealing company property and the personal belongings of its staff on March 7 in Murcia town, about 16 kilometers from here.

Alter Trade Foundation Inc. (AFTI) also demanded a written apology from the breakaway faction and the return of the firm's motorcycle, cellular phones and other items that the company claimed were stolen by RPA-ABB members.

The complaint was filed at the office of Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Eduardo Ermita.

The ATFI is producing *moscuvado* sugar and banana fritters, which are being exported mainly to Japan. Some of its officials were former leaders of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

The complaint stemmed from a March 7 incident where a group of RPA-ABB members led by one Ka Marlon Amante confiscated a Honda XL 125 motorcycle and other personal belongings from three ATFI personnel in Sitio Lupa, Barangay Sta. Rosa, Murcia.

A blotter from the Murcia police station identified the employees as Primo Lamayo, Ma. Cecelia Bedia and Sarah de los Reyes.

Also taken from them were a helmet, driver's licenses, a Nokia cellular phone and items.

In an affidavit, Lamayo said he and other ATFI staff were in the house of Felizardo Besa, chair of one of the cooperatives being assisted by the ATFI, when four heavily armed RPA-ABB members arrived and searched his officemates' bags without permission.

The suspects, he said, also threatened to tie them up if they did not cooperate. The group then forcibly took the motorcycle, helmet, cellular phone, driver's license and documents, said Lamayo.

Bedia and De los Reyes also issued similar affidavits.

In her letter to Ermita, AFTI president Norma Mugar said the incident was tantamount to harassment of civilians, which she said was a clear violation of the peace agreement and the clarificatory pact between the government and the RPA-ABB and its political arm, the Rebolusyonaryong Partido ng Manggagawa-Pilipinas (RPM-P).

She also sought a written guarantee that none of the AFTI staff members would be made to go through the same atrocities by the RPM-P/RPA-Forces forces anywhere in Negros and in other areas where the rebels operate.

While her company supports the government's effort to talk peace with the RPA-ABB, Mugar said all parties to any peace agreement should be made accountable for violations of the peace pact.

The government, she added, should not allow anybody to make a mockery of the peace process. ***Carla P. Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Team formed to probe raps vs hospital chief

By Ma. Diosa Labiste
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The Department of Health has created a fact-finding team to investigate complaints aired by some 400 employees of the Western Visayas Medical Center (WVMC) against the hospital chief.

Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit, in an interview with radio stations here, said a group of health officials with "unquestionable integrity and public service record," would arrive here this week to talk with the restive employees and hospital chief Dr. Jose Mari Fermin.

Also in a radio interview, Fermin said he was willing to take a leave of absence when the DOH investigation starts.

Fermin promised that the workers' benefits would be released soon. He dismissed charges of mismanagement as a rehash of earlier issues raised against him.

Hospital employees earlier asked Dayrit to intervene after Fermin allegedly failed to release their longevity pay, hazard pay and 14th month pay. They also accused Fermin of mismanagement and graft.

The workers recently filed a case against Fermin for alleged violation of the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and for dishonesty, grave misconduct and conduct unbecoming of public officers.

Included in the complaint were Joenel Calmorin, an engineer who heads the hospital's maintenance department, and Isidro Loberiza, whom hospital workers alleged to be a private driver of Fermin but who draws his salaries from the hospital.

Quezon officials assail use of provincial trucks for illegal quarrying in 2 towns

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.

LUCENA CITY—Officials of northern Quezon have assailed the use of provincial government trucks in the hauling of gravel and sand from an illegal quarry in Infanta and General Nakar towns.

Infanta Councilor Ysmael Villeno, also the municipal environment and natural resources officer, revealed that several trucks with the slogan "Sulong Quezon" painted on their sides have often been seen hauling sand and gravel from an illegal quarry along the Agus River.

The trucks haul gravel and sand at least 20 times a day, Villeno said during a special provincial council session Friday. The session was called to review the taxation scheme in mining and quarrying.

Quezon board member Hernando Avellaneda, former mayor of General Nakar, confirmed the report.

"Almost 80 percent of quarry operations in Infanta and General Nakar are illegal. And these 'Sulong Quezon' trucks are seen hauling these illegal products," he said.

"Sulong Quezon" is the slogan adopted by the provincial administration of Gov. Wilfrido Enverga.

All the provincial vehicles and heavy equipment have been painted with the slogan.

But the Enverga denied having knowledge of the alleged use of provincial vehicles in illegal quarrying.

"I know nothing of it," he told the INQUIRER.

Enverga added that some local and barangay officials borrow the provincial vehicles from time to time.

But he said he would order an investigation.

Rep. Rafael Nantes, who represents northern Quezon, said he has been protesting the illegal quarry operations in the place.

He said he would coordinate with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to stop the illegal activities.

Councilor Villeno blamed a certain Jose Aguado, the alleged operator of Counter Rocks Aggregates in Barangay Ilog, Infanta, whom he identified as the culprit in illegal quarrying in the area.

"Because of Aguadó's illegal activity, some 1,280 hectares of rice fields in nearby barangays are now in danger of irreparable damage," he said.

With the continuous dredging of the riverbed, the water level in the irrigation system of the National Irrigation Administration in the area is now in danger of drying up.

Board member Rommel Edaño, committee on environment and natural resources member, blamed the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board for the problem.

Salvador Martin, PMRB head, however, claimed that the rash of quarrying activities in the province is proof of progress.

Local officials also called for a review of the sharing scheme between the provincial and local government units on revenue derived from mining activities.

Manny Calayag, municipal environment and natural resources officer from Dolores town, criticized the sharing system and said the 40-60 sharing in favor of the province is disadvantageous to the local government.

"It is the local government unit and the residents that always end up shouldering the damage brought by any quarry operation in our respective places. But it is the provincial government that collects most of the money derived from mining," Calayag said.

An Appeal to
Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

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DOTC SECRETARY BECAUSE
HE IS MORALLY UNFIT
TO BE A MEMBER OF YOUR CABINET.

We believe Mr. Alvarez is not compatible with the high standard of morality you have installed in your government - marked by truth telling, respect for the Constitution, unassailable integrity and empowering honesty.

1. **We believe Mr. Alvarez's career has been marred with his propensity for deception.**
   - He misled you, Madame President, no less than five times about a provision in the PIATCO contract which inhibits the development of DMIA. Now he seeks to remove such provision he earlier denied.
   - He concealed the fact that Jeffrey Cheng of PIATCO stood as the godfather of his daughter in January 1996, a year before PIATCO was given the award for Terminal III. At that time Alvarez was the senior assistant general manager of MIAA.
   - He hoodwinked the public by calling the PIATCO contract "the best BOT deal the government ever had," when in reality the contract is full of provisions making your government the big loser.
   - He lied about his Statements of Assets and Liabilities by failing to disclose his other properties and sources of funds.
   - He conveniently "forgot" that he was Chairman of the MIAA Terminal III Philippine Bids and Awards Committee when he was asked about it by the Commission on Appointments.
   - He pretended not to know the details of the PIATCO contract at the CA, although he was a member of NAIA-MIAA management when the award was made.
2. **We believe he betrayed the Filipino people.**
   - He stubbornly defended and implemented the PIATCO contract, which is grossly disadvantageous to the government, taxpayers, more than 10,000 workers, Filipino travelers and the people from Central Luzon.
   - He has a case with the Ombudsman for overpricing on his contract with the government by P76 million.
3. **We believe his word cannot be trusted.**
   - You cannot trust his word, Madame President. As we stated earlier, you cannot get the real score about DMIA. And so you are facing a great multitude of disgruntled provincemates.
   - He is now making empty promises to the labor sector and your provincemates in Pampanga just so they will support his confirmation, notwithstanding the fact that, for the longest time, he did not even help them.
4. **We believe he is bereft of delicadeza.**
   - As congressman and Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation, which investigated the PIATCO contract, his company — Wintrack Builders — benefited from a P300 million contract with PIATCO.

Madame President, there are many more qualified candidates
for the position of DOTC Secretary characterized by integrity, honesty and competence.

Listen to your people through their representatives in the Commission
on Appointments who have by-passed him three times.

Listen to the good counsel of your Advisers and the other members of the Cabinet.

Ed Oredina
Chairman, Mobilization Committee
PAL Employees Association

Antonio V. Policarpio
Vice President
National Labor Union

Demosthenes Agan, Jr.
President
MIASCOR Workers Union

Perfecto R. Yasay, Jr.
Chairman
MASO

Fred Mangiliman
Attorney-In-Fact of more than 300 filers of a class suit against PIATCO

Benjamin P. Esteban
President (ACUPA)
Angeles Urban Poor

Filomeno S. Salenga
President
PASADA (Angeles)

Susan Pineda
Founder
Ing Makababaing Aksyon (IMA)

Angel Bautista
President
MABA (Bankers' Assn.)

Myrna P. Sarmiento
President, Pampanga
Electric Coop (PELCO II)

Nieda S. Yamzon
KKKA (Angeles)

Rosemarie Herrera
Executive Director
PAMPANGO

Edwin Beltran
Administrative Officer
Social Action Center (SACOP)

Itang Pineda
Kilusan para sa Kagalingan ng Kababaihan (KKKA)

for Nenita Gregorio-Sta. Ines
Executive Director
Health Integrated Dev't (HIDS)

for Esteban Masagca
Executive Director
PDRN (Disaster Response)

for Eugene Orejas
Project Officer
CONCERN (CL)

Jeff Adriano
ICAPEZO

Olga M. Tua
Secretary General
NUTRILINC

Virgilio de Guzman
SALBA (Bataan)

Noel S. Gloria
SKB (Bataan)

Isabel L. Boma
PNRC (Red Cross)

Connie Baltazar
PELCO II

Jess B. David
Consumer Protection (CLACPI)

Maria D. Lising
KKKA (Angeles)

May D. Lising
KKKA (Angeles)

Nina Saplala
CLACPI/(SLF)

Ghay Canetta
KKKA (Angeles)

Percy Angosta
KKKA (Angeles)

Lalaine Bacani
PELCO II

Leny Beltran
PELCO II

Fe Macayanan
KKKA (Angeles)

Aileen Sanchez
IMA Foundation Inc.

Dr. Malu Malamug
PMS (Medical Society)

Weng Gatmaitan
KKKA (Angeles)

advt.

Gloria gets tough on Erap

From page A1

bution of constitutional authority."

"The defense of the Constitution and the rule of law are non-negotiable," the President said in a speech before the consultative group meeting of foreign aid donors at the Holiday Inn Resort in Clark Field, Pampanga.

Ms Macapagal said her duty to defend the Constitution extended to the defense of "the great powers of government—the executive, judiciary and the legislature."

"We will not stand by while any or all of these institutions are under threat," the President said.

She did not exactly say how Malacañang would shield the judiciary from attacks by Estrada, whose game plan, according to observers, is to project himself as a victim of persecution and to take his fight to the streets.

Willing to help

While Ms Macapagal is taking a tougher stance, Estrada appears to be going soft on his successor.

In an interview with Net 25-television station aired yesterday morning, Estrada said he was willing to extend a helping hand if asked by the Macapagal administration.

"Basta sa kapakanan ng mamamayan, handa tayong tumulong (If it's for the good of the people, then I'll be ready to help)," Estrada told the station.

The President noted that leaders of Congress had called on Estrada to confine his cause within the ambit of the court, particularly the special division of the Sandiganbayan. "I have joined them in this call," Ms Macapagal said.

She noted that the judiciary had ample powers to "ward off nuisances and legalistic posturing."

"But when there is a brazen attempt to destroy the credibility and functionality of any court of justice, this calls for the concerted action by all institutions of democratic government, and for that matter, all the citizens of the democratic system," the President said.

Alluding to Estrada as a former movie actor, Ms Macapagal said the defense of the Constitution and the rule of law "cannot be the stuff of popularity or partisan contests."

The President assured foreign aid donors that her administration was determined to see the trial of Estrada through in the courts of justice.

"I want to firmly dispel any impression that the government is engaged in any strategy of appeasement or compromise on this matter," Ms Macapagal said.

She said some sectors were "trying to create an impression, quite erroneous, that the government is being wishy-washy in dealing with the political posturing of former President Estrada."

Some groups said Ms Macapagal tried to pay the ousted President a surprise visit Saturday to score a political settlement with the restive Estrada camp.

Loi confirms visit

Former First Lady and Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito said Ms Macapagal attempted to pay Estrada a visit at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center (VMMC) where he is detained.

"I don't think there was a snub there *pero totoo na merong* (but it's true that there was an) attempt to see him," Ejercito told Senate reporters.

Ejercito, who was with her husband when the alleged attempt to visit him was made, recalled that a soldier arrived and asked one of their maids if Estrada was ready to receive Ms Macapagal.

But the maid told the soldier that Estrada was still asleep.

In the interview aired by Net 25, Estrada clarified that he meant no disrespect for refusing to meet with the President.

He said he would have preferred that Ms Macapagal send *"abiso"* (advanced notice) that she was going to visit him in his detention cell.

"In fairness to her, *hindi ko naman siya ini*-snub (I did not snub her)," Estrada maintained.

Butz Aquino

Opposition Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino of Makati defended Estrada's reported refusal to receive President Macapagal.

"The perception of President Estrada's camp is that these gestures of reconciliation of Gloria do not match her words and deeds (towards Estrada)," Aquino said.

Aquino said Ms Macapagal had used "every opportunity" to criticize Estrada's work habits, lifestyle and character.

He suggested that certain protocols be observed in making such visits. "Visits of this nature can be preceded by ambassadors of goodwill," Aquino said.

He said personalities acceptable to both sides, like Speaker Jose de Venecia Jr. or Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., could be tapped to facilitate the visit.

But Malacañang belied for the third straight day reports that the President tried to visit Estrada.

Ms Macapagal took it upon herself to flatly deny that she attempted to see Estrada and that he snubbed her.

No appointment

"I did not ask for an appointment to see the former President," Ms Macapagal said in Filipino during the maiden broadcast of her new radio program 'Ang Panawagan ng Pangulo.'

The President noted that her two previous visits to Estrada at Fort Sto. Domingo in Sta Rosa, Laguna, and the VMMC were both prearranged and prepared well in advance by her staff.

"They're asking why I suddenly went there but I did not really go to the VMMC for a visit," she said.

Explaining her itinerary on Saturday, the President said she first went to the government-owned National Broadcasting Network (Channel 4) to tape her latest message to the nation starting 8 a.m.

The President said she was advised that the facilities there were better compared with the lighting and sound system of Radio-TV Malacañang inside the Palace.

She said her taping ended at about past 9 a.m. and from the network's compound on the Visayas Avenue, she motored to the VMMC, "which was the nearest helipad from Channel 4."

She said she was to use a helicopter for her scheduled 10 a.m. appointment in Tanauan, Batangas, to attend the 111th birth anniversary of the late President Jose Laurel.

"I previously thought that I would go by car (to Tanauan), that's why my taping was scheduled at 8 a.m. and it was just in time that it was finished at past 9 a.m.," she said.

Saying she arrived at the VMMC at about 9:30 a.m., the President recalled: "I of course went straight to the helicopter."

She reiterated that she went to VMMC simply "to get to the helicopter."

On Sunday, her spokesperson Rigoberto Tiglao decried as "atrocious" claims by the Estrada camp that Ms Macapagal waited in vain to see the ousted leader. ***With a report from Juliet L. Javellana***

Erap buddies seen at Berroya bash

From page A1

City Mayor Macario "Boy" Asistio and Nueva Ecija Gov. Tomas Joson—attended the noon bash of Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya.

Ms Macapagal herself was present at the party held at Camp Olivas in San Fernando, Pampanga, the headquarters of the Central Luzon office of the Philippine National Police, of which Berroya is regional director.

At one point in the party, Hagedorn assured the President that he was not going to be involved in any destabilization effort against her administration.

Berroya told reporters that it was Hagedorn himself who had sought the audience with Ms Macapagal.

But when interviewed by reporters, Hagedorn said his "very short conversation" with the President was only "coincidental" with his presence at the birthday celebration.

"My name is being mentioned in anti-government activities," he said. "I clarified that it was not true."

He said he attended the party to "extend best wishes" to Berroya, whom he described as a good friend.

Asked whether he had abandoned Estrada, Hagedorn said in Filipino: "Erap will always be a friend. Can we not be friends without creating enemies?"

In power

Hagedorn said that in his experience as a local government official, "we support whoever is in power."

According to Berroya, members of the Estrada camp are asking Hagedorn to provide "warm bodies" for the planned mass actions in support of the ousted President.

Hagedorn confirmed that several groups had approached him for help in some pro-Estrada rallies, but said these could not be considered destabilization efforts.

Besides, he said, "I turned them down."

He also clarified that San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, one of Estrada's sons, had never approached him regarding any destabilization effort.

In a statement faxed to the INQUIRER, Hagedorn said that in his brief talk with Ms Macapagal, "I assured her that I was never and will never be a party to any destabilization of the government, (and that) I respect the government and (the President)."

"I simply reiterated what I (as then secretary general) and other officers of the League of Cities (said) in our declaration of support to (Ms Macapagal) immediately after she assumed the presidency," Hagedorn said.

He also said he had issued the statement "to belie deplorable attempts by certain parties to exploit my presence at General Berroya's birthday celebration for obviously malicious political purposes."

Friends and foes

Also seen at Berroya's birthday party were Roberto Lastimoso, former PNP chief and now head of the Land Transportation Office, and leaders of the Rebo-lusyonaryong Alyansang Maka-bansa.

The RAM boys included former Navy Capt. Proceso Maligalig, former Army Col. Romeo Lim and former Col. Billy Bibit, now customs collector in Subic.

Lastimoso and Berroya are among the supposed archenemies of both Estrada and his then favorite PNP officer, now Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

Berroya is one of Ms Macapagal's most trusted supporters in the PNP. She tapped him to head the PNP Intelligence Group before moving him to Central Luzon.

Lastimoso was active in anti-Estrada activities running up to People Power II.

He was removed as PNP director general during the Estrada administration, after Lacson accused him of coddling an alleged drug lord.

'Ina ng Bayan' . . .

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emotional TV broadcast appealing for support.

In the same broadcast she also called herself "Ina ng Tahanan" to drive home the image of herself as a caring mother for all Filipinos.

She had since followed up with another broadcast with some variation on the theme that recalled Estrada's own claim to the title, "Ama ng Masa."

It was the title of his video CD documentary which he released last December, apparently to counter Ms Macapagal's efforts to win over the masses who have largely been identified as his supporters.

The label could have been a spin-off from his successful "Erap Para sa Mahirap" slogan during the May 1998 presidential elections.

Dante Ang's brainchild

Dante Ang, Ms Macapagal's personal publicist who concocted the "Ina ng Bayan" broadcast, denied that he meant to counter Estrada's self-proclaimed title as "Ama ng Masa."

"Honestly I didn't think about that," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

He said he didn't use the phrase "Ina ng Masa" because it was "too macho."

"As a woman, the title 'Ina ng Tahanan' is more appropriate for the President. 'Ina ng Bayan' is feminine," he said.

Ang thinks the "Ina ng Bayan" phrase will also click with the masses, like "Erap Para sa Mahirap."

He said a commercial was deemed successful if it was talked about and even spoofed.

He said ABS-CBN and dzMM ran an informal survey among 130 respondents mostly belonging to Class C and D.

He said 125 said the President's broadcast appealed to them, while the others said she should have stuck to her original image as strong and "*mataray*" (snooty).

"I will also measure its success by the degree of the negative comments from the opposition. They were very much against it, so that means we did something right," Ang added.

GMA concedes masses . . .

From page A1

tion was spending Official Development Assistance "on the right things."

Competent driver

"I hope you believe that we have a competent driver behind the steering wheel. But we need all the extra fuel that can be stocked to go the full distance," she said.

The President had a different tune last week. She maintained that her critics were wrong in saying that life had not improved under her administration. She said she was "hurt" whenever she heard such accusations.

But yesterday, the President admitted that her administration still had a lot to do to uplift the lives of the masses. "Of course you can't fix everything in the blink of an eye," she said.

But she reiterated that the country had a good economic showing last year despite the global recession.

She said she always took pride in telling world leaders and businessmen that the country's gross national product (the value of goods produced and services rendered) grew by 3.7 percent while other economies in the region like Singapore had negative growth.

However, the population is growing at a rapid 2.4-percent clip, eroding the GDP advance.

The President said she was able to bring down the budget deficit, inflation and interest rates, which would revive the local business climate. She was also able to keep the prices of rice, other basic commodities and transportation from going up.

"So in fact (our economy) is better off than many critics care to concede. But we admit that being better off is comparative, relative to the rest of the world," she said.

Fence-sitters, patience

The President said she believed that "fence sitters" outnumber her critics.

"What I ask of them is patience and to understand how hard our work is, that fixing our country's problems does not happen overnight," she said.

She said she was "inspired" by former US President Bill Clinton's own experience, when the American people did not realize the significance of his programs until nearly the end of his term.

"That inspires and consoles me (and reminds me) that I should not rush the people into understanding me immediately, specially my critics and fence sitters," she said.

"(It also reminds me that) I should not be impatient when fence sitters do not feel yet the fruits of what I have done because the timing is up to God," she added.

The economic prospects of the Philippines have improved a year after Ms Macapagal became president, giving tens of millions of her poor countrymen a chance at a better life, according to a World Bank official.

"Development prospects have improved since the last (donors' meeting) in 2000—brought about by political stabilization and a determined new team which focused on key priorities," World Bank country director Robert Vance Pulley said.

Milestone

Pulley said the country's P147-billion budget deficit last year, just P2 billion above target, was "a first milestone on the path to fiscal consolidation by 2006."

He said "improved policy credibility and management helped earn the Philippines continued reasonable access to external markets," and that with these, "there is reason to believe that the Philippines now has a greater opportunity for renewed poverty reduction."

The President has put poverty reduction at the top of her agenda. As of calendar 2000, 39.4 percent of the population, or more than 31 million Filipinos, lived on less than 75 US cents a day.

"Translating improving economic performance into sustained poverty reduction will be the ultimate yardstick by which the (donor) community and government's joint efforts are measured," Pulley said.

The country's remaining challenges include "mobilizing public revenues needed to fund development priorities, strengthening the financial sector, increasing investment and job creation, improving peace and order" as well as efforts to "reduce corruption," he said.

With a report from AFP

Sign of rebirth . . .

From page A1

would reopen.

"You can't put a good product down. This is too good a place to close down," he told reporters.

Dos Palmas, which is about an hour away by boat from Puerto Princesa, is named after the island's two 80-foot *buri* palms.

Landscaped gardens with more than 150 varieties of plants dot the island, and many of the guest cottages are built on stilts over the water.

The resort lies in an unspoiled region blessed with beautiful beaches, virgin mangrove forests, a wildlife sanctuary and an underground river.

Its main attraction is the pristine setting. There are no newspapers, no telephones and only two television sets in the two bars.

Gordon said he considered Dos Palmas' reopening a sign that "as a whole, tourism in the Philippines will bounce back—and bounce stronger."

Boom year

Dos Palmas was in its "boom year" when the Abu Sayyaf struck. It had built up a reputation rivaling the more upscale resorts of El Nido and Amanpulo.

All its 50 rooms were occupied, and bookings ran the whole length of the year.

This enviable situation was shattered last May 27 when the bandit group descended on the resort and kidnapped a group of 17 Filipinos and three Americans.

All the Filipinos, except for two resort employees who were killed, have since regained their freedom. Of the three Americans, one, Guillermo Sobero, was eventually killed. The other two, missionary couple Martin and Gracia Burnham, are still being held hostage in Basilan along with Filipino nurse Ediborah Yap.

After the attack, Dos Palmas clients began canceling reservations. In just a few weeks, the resort's employees were outnumbering its guests 10 to 1.

It was downhill from there.

Four months ago, with the terrorism scare aggravated by the Sept. 11 attacks in the United States, the owners of Dos Palmas decided to close shop.

And in keeping with the US government's claim that the Abu Sayyaf has links with the terrorist network al-Qaida, 660 US soldiers are now taking part in joint military exercises with the Philippine military to help wipe out the bandit group.

Streetsweepers

Last month, the owners of Dos Palmas were able to secure loans that allowed them to reopen the resort.

Perhaps more important for prospective clients, the owners have hired additional security men and acquired more high-powered firearms, including "Streetsweeper" shotguns.

A regular police detail has also been stationed on the island.

Maj. Gen. Manuel Carranza, chief of the Armed Forces' Western Command, told reporters that the 2nd Marine Battalion has been deployed to guard key tourist spots in Palawan.

"We are providing more security measures and a better security force to protect the facilities," Carranza said, adding:

"The deployment was done because we found that our forces in Palawan are not enough. Over the last two years, there has been resurgence in the activities of terrorists."

Palawan's tourism and local government officials are hoping to put the Abu Sayyaf kidnapping behind them, using Dos Palmas' reopening as an anchor.

"With the resort reopening its doors, there's an additional momentum," Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra said. "We hope to regain our image as an ecotourism center."

Poll execs refuse to shake hands

From page A1

She said that, despite an appeal from Senate President and CA Chair Franklin Drilon to withdraw their formal opposition to Benipayo as a "starting point for reconciliation," her group—Mehol Sadain, Rufino Javier, Ralph Lantion and herself—was standing pat.

Their opposition was "non-negotiable," she said, and should not be made a precondition for reconciliation.

"It was like they were pushing us to the wall," Tancangco said. She and Sadain did not join the press briefing after the two-hour session while Javier and Lantion, who flew in from the province, did not make it to the meeting.

"It took us one year to do that (file the petition). We cannot just commit to withdrawing it," she said, adding they "did not see a change of heart in the chairman" during his first year in office.

An obviously disappointed Tancangco said Drilon merely heard Benipayo's side and then suggested that the four commissioners withdraw their opposition.

Drilon left without hearing their side of the story, she said.

Tancangco added, however, that she and her allies would study their position in the coming weeks, to see what would happen during the reconciliation.

Political leaders

Benipayo and Tancangco were joined at the meeting, which came a few hours before the CA confirmation hearing, by Commissioners Tuason, Borra and Sadain.

Aside from Drilon and De Venecia, the other political leaders included Pimentel, Angara, Sen. Blas Ople, Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez, House Majority Leader Neptali Gonzales II, Deputy Majority Leader Francis Escudero, former Vice President Salvador Laurel, Crispin Remulla, Silvestre Bello and Frisco San Juan, representing a total of 10 political parties.

"We're here to help the Comelec break the deadlock . . . because if we don't have a working Comelec, we will not have a working democracy," said Angara, chair of the Senate committee on electoral reforms.

He said "everything hinged" on the commissioners' reconciliation as their "substantive differences" would adversely affect the conduct of clean and credible elections this year and in 2004.

"For my part, you can be assured that I will agree to the arrangements if these are in accordance with the law," Benipayo said at the press briefing. "I will not be a stumbling block . . . to the pursuit of orderly and peaceful elections."

The leaders will meet with the Comelec officials again on April 22, De Venecia said, to approve their "terms of reference in deciding how the Comelec could act as a collegial body."

"The decision to come together for the ground rules is solely the work of the Comelec. We'll just here to help as facilitators," Angara stressed.

De Venecia hailed the agreement as a "major breakthrough" in ending the factionalism and infighting which threaten the implementation of three major electoral reforms: the computerization of elections starting in 2004 to wipe out election fraud, the campaign finance reform act providing state subsidy to political parties, and the Absentee Voting Act that would allow some 7 million Filipinos to vote during national elections.

De Venecia said the President supported the three measures. He said the commissioners had also agreed to join the series of Senate-House consultation meetings in the Middle East, Italy and the United States in the next few weeks to finalize a joint Legislative-Comelec agreement on the absentee voting bill.

Two oppositors

During the hearing, two of the 11 oppositors to Benipayo's appointment were presented. Judge Florentino Floro Jr. blamed Benipayo for meting him the "longest indefinite suspension" on record, and questioned Benipayo's "medical fitness" to hold the post of Comelec chair.

Another oppositor, Dante Barcebal, a former local official in Albay, questioned Benipayo's unilateral junking of the voter's identification system in Comelec, his purchase of a "luxury" vehicle on his first day in office as Comelec chair, his reimbursement of P13,000 in medicine expenses after a surgical operation, and his trip to Sweden where he attended a seminar "without an invitation" from the organizers.

In his rejoinder, Benipayo said the voter's ID system project was not approved by his predecessor, Harriet Demetriou, and stressed that the suspension was an en banc decision.

He said no car was assigned to the Comelec chair when he assumed office, though under the law, he was entitled to at least two service cars. Besides, the internal auditor approved his request for the purchase, he added.

Regarding his medicine expenses, he said that it was court practice for judges to avail themselves of free medicine to keep them healthy. He said his request for reimbursement was also approved by the internal auditor.

As for his trip to Sweden last year, Benipayo said the invitation was intended for former Commissioner Teresita Flores, who recommended him instead. He got his invitation after Flores endorsed him, he said. ***With a report from Rocky Nazareno***

AZERBAIJAN SLUGFEST

Pinoy boxers capture 2 golds

BAKU, Azerbaijan—Harry Tanamor and Violito Payla sparkled and gifted Team Caltex Philippines with two gold medals following impressive wins in the Prof. Chowdry Cup on Saturday here.

Tanamor and Payla, who made it into the elite Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines' Team A pool last December, subdued their rivals in the 48 and 51 kilograms finals, respectively, at the packed Olympic Sports Center.

Tanamor, punching and moving around the ring like a seasoned fighter, neutralized the punching power of the brawny Abdulkadir Kochak of Turkey for a 26-9 win.

Not to be outdone, Payla outslugged shifty counter-puncher Murahashi Kaori to register a convincing 26-13 victory.

Both only 23 and privates in the Army's special service unit, Tanamor and Payla also put the team, supported by the Philippine Sports Commission, Pacific Heights, Revicon, and Adidas, in contention for the overall championship of this 27-nation slugfest.

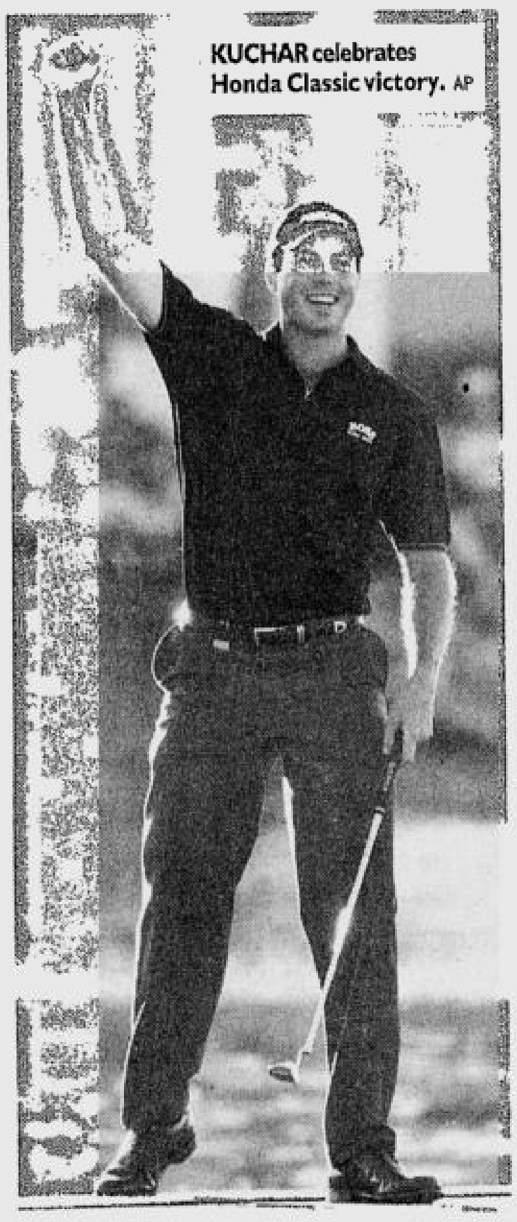
As of presstime, Azerbaijan's No. 1 team is fighting in five finals followed by its No. 2 team and Turkey with three and Uzbekistan, Egypt and Pakistan with two apiece.

Tanamor thanked Abap president Manny Lopez as well as Zamboanga City Mayor Ma. Clara Lobregat for supporting him.

Payla, of Cagayan de Oro, was observed by coaches Gregorio Caliwan and Nolito Velasco as a better and more improved fighter than before when he won a gold in the tough Roberto Balado Cup in Cuba last year.

Head of delegation and Abap chairn emeritus Mel Lopez relayed his son Manny's congratulatory message via long distance call to Tanamor and Payla, who were then reminded that "this is only the first step" to their planned trip to the Busan Asian Games in South Korea this September.

Abap has lined up at least five more international stints for Team Caltex Philippines.



KUCHAR celebrates Honda Classic victory. AP

Sta. Lucia tests Selecta 5

By June Navarro

GAME TODAY: (Philsports)
6p.m.—Sta. Lucia vs Selecta-RP

STA. Lucia Realty and the star-studded Selecta-RP Team have been struggling for almost a month.

The Realtors are seeking the right import combination in a bid to break the chain of inconsistency while the Nationals always find themselves fumbling down the stretch.

Tonight, one team will send another deeper in the standings as they collide in the PBA Governors Cup at the Philsports Arena.

Reeling from two straight setbacks against Federal Express and Talk N Text, respectively, the Realtors are out to improve their 1-3 slate with Victor Thomas and NBA veteran Mark Davis expected to take the lead.

Davis, the fourth reinforcement hired by the Realtors this conference, had a magnificent debut with 26 points but fouled out midway in the third quarter that made the 98-96 Talk N Text win easy.

It is no secret that the Realtors are experiencing the ill-effects of lending Marlou Aquino and Dennis Espino to the RP training pool with only sniper Paolo Mendoza and Gerard Francisco posting impressive numbers among the locals so far.

The sweet-shooting Mendoza keyed the Realtors' only win by scoring five straight points in the final minute to deal Barangay Ginebra a 75-72 defeat.

After that glorious Feb. 23 win, it was all downhill for the Realtors, a painful phenomenon also being experienced by Selecta-RP Team.

The Nationals, behind Asi Taulava, Poch Juinio, Dennis Espino, Olsen Racela and Dondon Hontiveros, won their first game of the conference against San Miguel Beer, 64-59, but failed to duplicate that feat in the next four games.

50TH TITLE

American Andre Agassi pumps his fist in delight after beating Juan Balcells of Spain, 6-2, 7-6 (2), in the final of the Franklin Templeton Classic on Sunday in Scottsdale, Arizona. Agassi became the eighth player to win 50 championships in the open era, which began in 1968. Among active players, he trails only Pete Sampras, who has 63 titles. In Delray, Florida, Italian Davide Saguinetti downed Andy Roddick, 6-4, 4-6, 6-4, to win the International Tennis Championship, while Martina Hingis and Justine Henin advanced to the fourth round of the Pacific Life Open in Indian Wells, California. AP

Kutitap picks UST dribbler

By Dennis Eroa

THE 2002 PBL rookie draft was so shallow that an unheralded dribbler from the University of Santo Tomas yesterday emerged as number one draft pick.

Hardly mentioned during the pre-draft, young guard Christian Luanzon of the Tigers was the surprising pick by Challenge Cup third placer Kutitap Toothpaste, which got the draft right from Ateneo-Pioneer.

Partly to blame for the excitement-less draft is a ruling which enabled PBL teams to automatically earn the rights to their respective "scouted" players.

These "scouted" players are no longer included in the draft, robbing the applicants' list of big names. Talented collegiate cagers also shunned the draft due to the coming UAAP and NCAA seasons.

Except Welcoat, which took a one-conference leave of absence, competing teams, including newcomer John'O Juzz, participated in the draft under the watchful eyes of Commissioner Chino Trinidad.

The "scouted" players are Far Eastern University's James Razon and Rhagnee Sinco, who went to Ateneo-Pioneer and Montaña Jewels, respectively. Ana Freezers which took Rey Mendoza and CBF-CBL titleholder Blu Detergent which snared Lago Raterta. Lorenz Albano, Cesar Catli and Al Federiso went to ICTSI-La Salle, Kutitap and Shark Energy Drink, respectively. Newcomer John O' Juzz scouted Nazir Kiram and Samigue Eman while picking PYBL MVP Edelito Saygo.

PSA Cup today

THE FIRST leg of the 2002 Philippine Sportswriters Association golf circuit, which will be presented by Purefoods, fires off today at the fabled Wack Wack East course. Tee-off time is 7 a.m.

Kuchar posts 1st Tour win

CORAL SPRINGS, Florida—Matt Kuchar, the 1997 US Amateur champion who turned down millions in favor of graduating from college, earned his first PGA Tour victory Sunday, shooting a 6-under 66 in the final round of the Honda Classic.

Kuchar, who finished at 19-under 269 and earned $ 630,000 in his 17th event as a professional, beat Brad Faxon (67) and Joey Sindelar (70) by two strokes.

He had eight birdies and two bogeys in his final round. He made four consecutive birdies on the back nine to help him rally from a four-shot deficit to Sindelar, who made his first bogey in the tournament on the 71st hole.

Kuchar needed just 23 putts, including eight in the final eight holes, to get the victory.

He gained a share of the lead with a 3.6-meter (12-foot) birdie putt on the par-4 No. 13, then grabbed the outright lead on with a birdie on the par-5 No. 14 - his fourth straight birdie.

Kuchar extended the lead to two strokes with another birdie on the par-5 16th, and made sure no one could tie him with a solid par save on the tough, par-4 18th.

Kuchar was a college sophomore when he graced Augusta National with a wide-eyed gaze to go with a game good enough to tie for 21st and earn an invitation back to the Masters.

Two months later, he starred again in the U.S. Open. He outplayed several big names to reach the weekend just two strokes off the lead, and wound up in a respectable tie for 14th. *AP*

Els pockets 2nd Dubai Classic title

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates —Ernie Els of South Africa captured his second Dubai Desert Classic title - and second title in two weeks - in emphatic fashion Sunday, beating Niclas Fasth of Sweden by four strokes at the 1 million pound ($1.42 million) Emirates Golf Club.

The 32-year-old world No. 3 carded a final round 3-under par 69 for a 16-under 272 total, continuing his remarkable consistency of shooting below 70 in all four rounds.

Els won the Genuity Classic on the PGA Tour last week and won also in Dubai in 1994.

Fasth, the British Open runner-up in 2000, carded a 2-under par 70 in the fourth round for a 12-under 276.

The Swede began the day three shots behind Els, but shared the lead by the seventh hole with an eagle on the par-5 third hole as the South African faltered with bogeys on the par-4 first hole and par-3 fourth. *AP*

BLAST FROM THE PAST

TODAY in 1990, Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla shot 576 points to snare the rapid fire eliminations at the NRPA range in Quezon City. Also today in 1991, Arianne Cerdeña and George Fernandez garnered 3214 and 3303 pins, respectively, to snatch the Masters titles at the 9th President Cup bowling championships in Jakarta.

6th Ucap 7-cock meet blasts off today

A RARE showdown of United Cockers Association of the Philippines and National Cockers Association top guns unfolds today (March) 12 when the 6th Ucap 7-Cock Derby gets going before an expected jampacked crowd at Mandaluyong Coliseum.

Sponsored by Sagupaan Super Feeds and Washout Shampoo, the derby will be jointly hosted by Mario Villamor, Tito Reyes, Benjie Lim and Wacky Salud.

Former Gov. Ito Ynares, one of two champions in last week's Mandaluyong 5-Cock Derby, headlines the tough NCA group that include the legendary Nene Araneta back-to-back NCA Cocker of the Year Jun Santiago, former Sta. Ana Racing Club owner and presently La Loma Cockpit operator Tos Reyes, ex-Mayor Jessie Viceo of Bulacan and 2002 Mandaluyong International 9-Cock Derby champion Henry Tan.

Expected to give them stiff competition are Ucap bets Patrick Antonio, Butch Macasaet, Vic Yu, Esting Teopaco, Pol Estrellado, Joey delos Santos, Rep. Claude Bautista, Boyboy Roa, Raymond Velayo, Biboy Enriquez, Mauro Prieto, Blandy Tolentino and Mayor Gerry "Boy" Espina, among others.

On March 19 and 21 is the 7th Ucap/Firebird Anito MB 7-Cock Derby with hotelier sportsman Biboy Enriquez and Palawan's bet Mauro Prieto.

For other inquiries, please contact 531-4003, 531-4005, 534-4110 and 535-2341.

Early start for Pampanga invitational derby

PAMPANGA Coliseum's much-awaited Sagupaan Bigtime 5-Cock Invitational Derby will start at 4 p.m. on Friday (March 15) since more than 90 fights are lined up.

At least 40 participants are expected to join the event and among the latest to sign up are newcomers Nestor Salonga, Ruel Feliciano and RQP Group.

According to derby host and well-known *sabong* idol Patrick Antonio, practically all big-time cockers of Central Luzon are seeing action and to challenge them are participants from Metro Manila, Negros Occidental and Cebu.

At stake is guaranteed prize of P.7 million for the champions plus a bonus of P20,000 and trophy to the participants who will win the coveted Fastest Kill award.

The derby is sponsored by Sagupaan Hammer Dewormer and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. Submission of weights is on day of the derby. For other inquiries, please contact 845-3445.

BEST Center clinics on

A WEEK-LONG clinic at the Sto. Domingo gymnasium in Vigan, Ilocos Sur kicked off Milo BEST Center's busy summer basketball schedule yesterday.

The clinic is part of Ilocos Sur Gov. DV Savellano's sports camp. Another session will be held on March 18-23 also at Sto. Domingo gymnasium, according to organizer Leo Palma, who may be contacted at (0917) 568-0963.

Milo BEST Center will also conduct summer classes on March 18-23 in Dagupan City with Tess Bernardino (tel. No. 975-662-2348) as organizer.

SPORTS ON TV

Compiled by Lorenzo Manguiat

BASKETBALL: Big 10 Tournament, Quarterfinals at 10 a.m., Big East Tournament, Semifinal #2 at 5 p.m. on ESPN
GOLF: Golfglobe 2002 at 10:30 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports
This is the PGA Tour at 11 a.m. on Star Sports
LPGA Takefuji Classic, Second Round at 12:30 p.m. on ESPN
PGA Honda Classic, Second Round at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports
SNOOKER: World Snooker Tour - Masters from Wembley at 8:30 p.m. on ESPN
SOCCER: English Premier Football League - Aston Villa vs Newcastle United at 7 a.m. (r), Charlton Athletic vs Arsenal at 12 noon (r) on Star Sports
Futbol Mundial at 3:30 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

Guardo subdues Petronas

By Roy Luarca

GAMES TODAY:
4:00 p.m.—Indonesia vs Guardo
5:30 p.m.—Malaysia vs RP-Spring

CEBU CITY—Guardo-M. Lhuillier proved itself worthy of donning the Philippine team colors with a 74-65 victory over Petronas of Malaysia yesterday in the Southeast Asia Basketball Association (Seaba) Champion's Cup at the Cebu Coliseum here.

Formed less than a week ago from standouts of the Cebu Basketball League, Guardo-M. Lhuillier used a fullcourt press to rattle the Malaysians and then put the cuffs on import Jamal Livingston to gain a share of the lead with RP-Spring Cooking Oil in the five-team, four-nation tournament.

"We pressured their ball carriers and double-teamed Livingston," said Guardo-M. Lhuillier coach Yayoy Alcoseba. "After that everything fell into place." The Filipinos, behind the guns of Jerry Jaca, led by 17 points twice, the last at 65-48 early in the fourth quarter.

The 6-foot-4 Jaca wound up with 22 points aside from helping former PBA import and longtime Cebu resident Darryl Smith limit the 6-foot-7 Livingston to nine points in the second half.

RP-Spring Oil is trying to follow up its 82-77 conquest of Aspac Texmaco Indonesia against Tong Whye Singapore at presstime.

Scores:

GUARDO-LHUILLIER 74—Jaca 22, Reyes 11, Marata 11, Ocanada 8, Maglasang 7, Huelar 7, Smith 6, Enriquez 2, Almonte 0.

PETRONAS 65—Livingston 24, Saryaseehan 12, Yik 11, Sheh 6, Yong 6, Yeh 3, Keang 2, Wey 1.

Halftime: 49-39.

Orlando triumphs

ORLANDO, Florida—Tracy McGrady had 22 points, and Pat Garrity scored 11 of his 15 in the third quarter as the Orlando Magic beat the struggling Toronto Raptors 92-79 Sunday.

McGrady, who scored a career-high 50 points against Washington on Friday, shot just 7-for-24 with six turnovers.

Vince Carter had 16 points to lead the Raptors despite missing most of the third quarter after Garrity accidentally elbowed him in the head. Antonio Davis added 15 points and 12 rebounds, but shot 5-for-15.

Complete results:

Orlando 92, Toronto 79; Houston 95, Utah 92; Boston 98, Washington 91; Sacramento 98, Milwaukee 73; Indiana 89, Detroit 84; L.A. Clippers 95, Cleveland 78; L.A. Lakers 117, New York 103; Charlotte 88, Phoenix 82. *AP*

Duke top seed

LOS ANGELES—Defending champions Duke claimed the number one seed for the NCAA tournament for a record fifth consecutive year on Sunday, as Maryland, Kansas and Cincinnati joined the Blue Devils taking top spots in the three other regional brackets.

March Madness moved into high gear as the Selection Committee revealed its 34 at-large selections to go along with 31 automatic berths that combine to make up the 65 team tournament that will be the focus of North American sports fans for the next month.

The Blue Devils (29-3) crushed North Carolina State 91-61 earlier on Sunday to become the first team in the 49-year history of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) to win four straight championships. *Reuters*

Marquez (11) of Team Edgesport waves as he prepares to cross the finish line.

Marquez rules super karting anew

FAST-RISING Jeremy Marquez of Team Edgesport once again showed why he is the Filipino karter to watch out for as he topped the Intercontinental-A (ICA) class for the second straight leg of the 2002 Shell Super Karting at the Carmona Circuit on Sunday.

The 22-year-old Marquez dominated the Intercontinental-A class with a total time of 20:04.323 after 20 laps to follow up his smashing first leg victory two weeks ago.

Jeremy, a son of Parañaque Mayor Joey Marquez, placed third in the first heat before outduelling eventual fifth placer Dado Peña in the second heat. He then erased all doubts as to who is the best of the lot by pulling away in the third heat.

"I'm glad I was able to bounce back in the last two heats," said Marquez, who is supported by Casino Filipino, Sky Trek and Star Fleet. "In this race, anything can happen but you just have to maintain your focus."

SPORTS

Editor **Al S. Mendoza** ● *Assistant Editor* **Edwin M. Villanueva**

PSA induction March 14

MANILA Mayor Lito Atienza will induct the new set of officers of the Philippine Sportswriters Association headed by Bert Cuevas of the Manila Standard at 7 p.m. Thursday (March 14) at Ballroom B of Holiday Inn Manila. Philippine Olympic Committee president Celso Dayrit and Philippine Sports Commission Chair Eric Buhain have also been invited to deliver short remarks.

KING OF THE ROAD

RP runner wins HK race

By Marc Anthony Reyes

EDUARDO Buenavista, the country's brightest hope in the Busan Asian Games, bested more than 3,000 competitors to rule the prestigious Adidas King of the Road 10K run in record fashion in Hong Kong last Sunday.

The 24-year-old Buenavista spent the first kilometer of the event trailing the favorite, Jun Hiratsuka of Japan, whom he will most likely encounter in the coming Asiad's middle and long distance events.

When he noticed that Hiratsuka was also holding his pace, Buenavista decided to take the lead and wait until the Japanese makes his move. But it never happened as Buenavista held sway until the finish line at the grounds of the Chek Lap Kok Airport.

Buenavista, an airman first class who has been in Baguio City the past two months training for the Asiad, clocked 30 minutes and 19 seconds, which broke the course record but was still far from his personal best of 29 minutes he set last February.

Hiratsuka, who is the 1994 Asian Games silver winner in the 10,000 meters, finished two minutes and 20 seconds behind Buenavista, while Thailand King of the Road champion Boonthung Srisung Duar wound up third at 32:52.

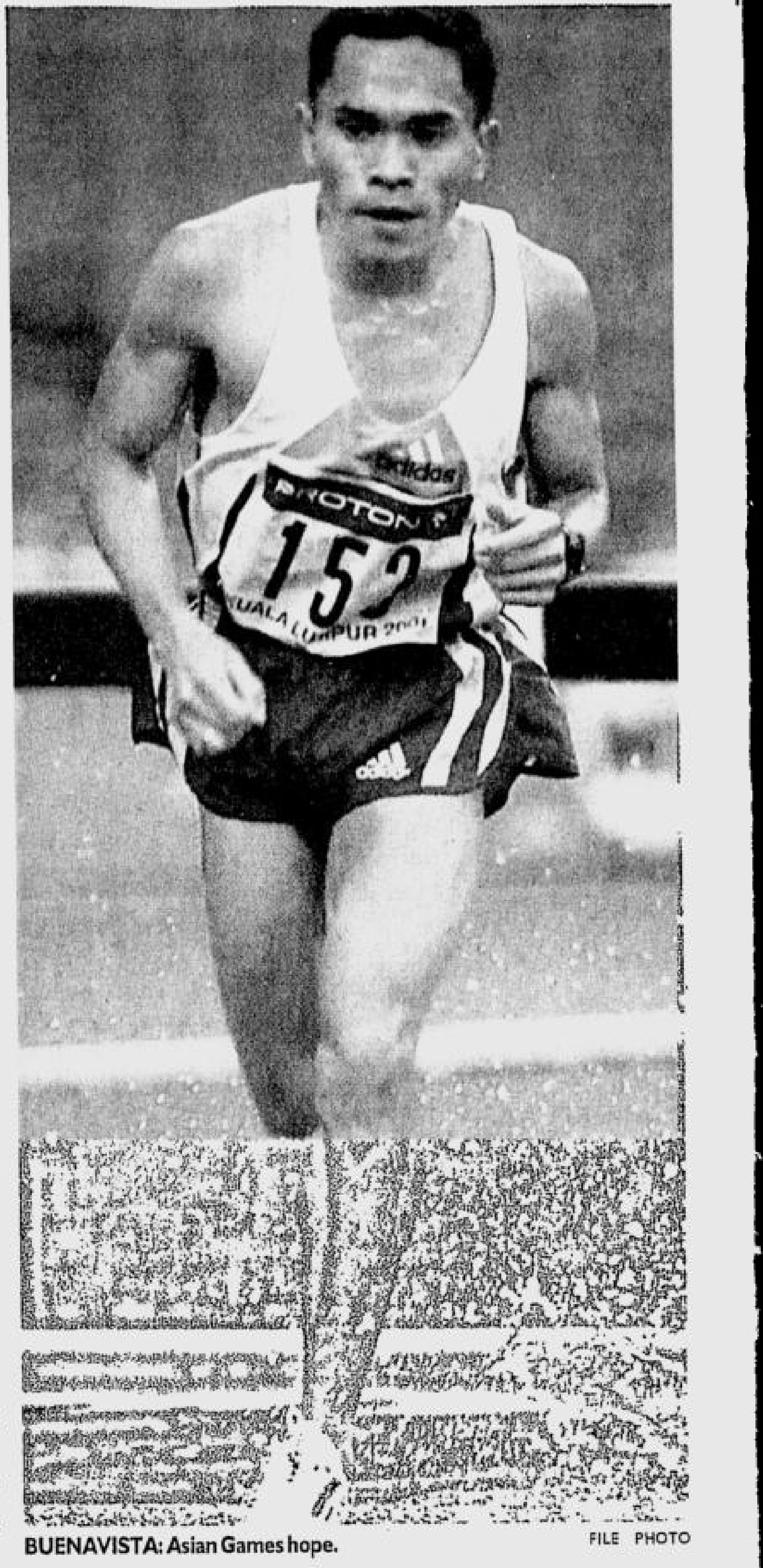
"I tried to gauge his strength at first but it never changed so I decided to wait for him but I think he never got into the race," said Buenavista, who stands 5-foot-1. "If he was trying to size me up, I still have a lot to show that day."

Still, Buenavista's time is within striking distance of the Asian Games 10K mark of 28.45. However, Buenavista will likely to be fielded in 5,000m and 3,000m steeplechase, his gold medal events in last year's Southeast Asian Games.

"He could have easily won four gold medals in the Southeast Asian Games last year if it was held in the Philippines," said Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association president Go Teng Kok, who added that in the Busan Asiad, Buenavista might be limited to just two events.

"But his progress must continue especially since other Asiad bets are improving," Go added. "At least our chances of winning medals in Asian Games turned brighter."

Go said Buenavista will see action in several international events within the next few months in preparation for the Asiad.



BUENAVISTA: Asian Games hope. FILE PHOTO

MBA: Davao Eagles acquire new head coach

THE TPG-DAVAO Eagles, trying to keep pace with the rebuilding program being undertaken by other MBA teams, yesterday acquired the services of new head coach Bong Go and promising center Billy Mamaril.

Go, a veteran coach who once served as assistant to the revered Baby Dalupan with Presto, replaced Jun Noel, while the 6-foot-6 Mamaril is deemed to be the dominant big man the Eagles have long been searching for.

Vito Orcullo, TPG vice president for Mindanao who's acting as the Eagles' team manager, said Go and Mamaril were signed up yesterday.

"We got Go not only because of his experience and expertise, but because he is a Davaoeño," said Orcullo. "Mamaril would provide us the inside presence."

Only 21, Mamaril played for Ateneo Pioneer in the PBL last year and merited second looks for his agility and power rebounding.

The son of former PBA player Romy Mamaril, Billy grew up in the United States. Orcullo bared that aside from Mamaril, they have several other players in mind, including a 6-foot-4 Fil-Am who can play both forward spots.

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Checkmate classes start April 1

MILO Checkmate will launch its summer clinics starting April 1 in Metro Manila.

Classes will be held simultaneously at St. Benedict College, Alabang Hills from 7-11 a.m. at the HS student lounge; at the badminton hall of Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, Vito Cruz, Manila from 9 a.m.-1 p.m., and at the Greenhills Shopping Center, San Juan—2:30-6:30 p.m. at the second floor o f2/F Centermall.

The daily classes will be held for one week, starting on April 10.

For more details, call the Metropolitan Chess Club at 826-8560 and 0916-852-1069.

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METRO

Editor Louie C. Camino

Dead for the love of mangoes

JANITOR Antonio Odi was killed while bus conductor Dondylan Dino was hurt when they tried to pick mangoes from a tree in Pasay City at around 11:30 a.m. Sunday, police said. Odi, 49, died when the steel pipe he was using to pick a mango off a tree touched a live wire in a bus terminal on Edsa Extension. Dino, 19, suffered from electric shock and is now confined at the San Juan de Dios Hospital.

Christian Esguerra

On Target: What's wrong with GMA's TV gimmick? /A20
Japanese, Filipino students robbed /A20

ABS-CBN van kills mother, girl

By Nelson Flores

A MOTHER and her 6-year-old daughter were killed and two other family members were injured when an ABS-CBN van spun out of control and hit the family yesterday morning in Quezon City.

Killed were Estela Roxas, 30, and her daughter Paulyn, 6, of 70 Sitio Mabilog, Tatalon Munti, Barangay Culiat, Quezon City, police said. Both died upon arrival at the New Era Hospital.

Roxas' husband Manolito, 30, and their other daughter Celyn, 2, were still undergoing treatment for their injuries at the East Avenue Medical Center, police said.

The driver of the van, Antonio Magat Jr., 26, of 106 Bagong Sibul St., Marcela Village in Caloocan City, surrendered to police after the accident. He suffered only minor injuries.

A press statement from ABS-CBN said the van, belonging to their AM radio station dzMM, spun out of control because of an oil slick and slippery roads, which caused the vehicle to skid and spin clockwise.

The statement said the network would provide the family financial assistance.

Investigation showed that the Roxas family was alighting from a pedestrian overpass at the corner of Commonwealth Avenue and Ylanan Street in Diliman at about 5: 15 a.m. when the wayward ABS-CBN van (UKW 455) driven by Magat hit them.

Police said Magat was driving toward the direction of Fairview, Quezon City.

Chief Insp. Angelito Ballesteros, Central District Traffic Enforcement Office-Traffic Sector 5 chief, said Magat claimed to have lost control of the van because of an oil slick, which made the road slippery.

Magat is facing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in two counts of homicide and two counts of physical injuries before the local city prosecutors' office.

DENNIS SABANGAN

AN oil slick is said to have caused this ABS-CBN van to spin out of control and kill a mother and child yesterday in Quezon City.

Prisons director serenades inmates in 'videoke bar'

By Christian V. Esguerra

EVEN IF his critics want him out, Bureau of Corrections director retired Col. Ricardo Macala is enjoying the strong support of inmates, none of whom appear to be rich or influential.

Prisoners, mostly belonging to the Commando gang, lined up from the entrance of the maximum security compound of the New Bilibid Prisons to the dusty streets and welcomed Macala and his reporter guests with placards, saying, "We love Macala!" during a tour of prison facilities yesterday.

Macala toured reporters yesterday to show them that there were no videoke bars with guest relations officers (GROs) at the NBP's maximum security compound.

Reports earlier alleged that prison officials were giving special treatment to high-profile inmates and even conniving with them to put up videoke bars with GROs at the maximum security compound.

Macala's aides said the inmates' strong show of support only disproved the alleged anomalies at the NBP.

But there were videoke machines at the compound, mostly in the canteens, which inmates owned and operated for income and recreation, Macala said.

Using one of these machines, the soft-spoken prisons chief sang the 1950s Eddy Arnold classic, "You Don't Know Me," to the delight of the inmates at the maximum security compound.

"You give your hand to me, and then you say hello, and I can hardly speak, my heart is beating so, and anyone can tell, you think you know me well, but you don't know me," Macala sang.

Scoring a decent 86 on the videoke machine, Macala clarified that he did not sing the song to taunt his critics whom he accused of staging a demolition job against him. He said it was merely a playful rendition of the ballad.

Earlier, Dante Jimenez, chair of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption asked for Macala's temporary relief from his post amid allegations of irregularities in the NBP.

Another prison official, Supt. Rachel Ruelo, also accused Macala of falsifying his birth certificate, changing it from 1935 to 1939, to secure an appointment as administrator of Lucena City before he became prisons chief.

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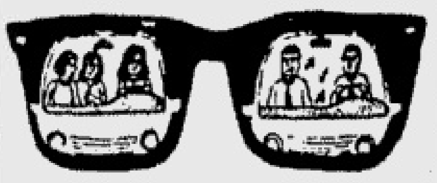

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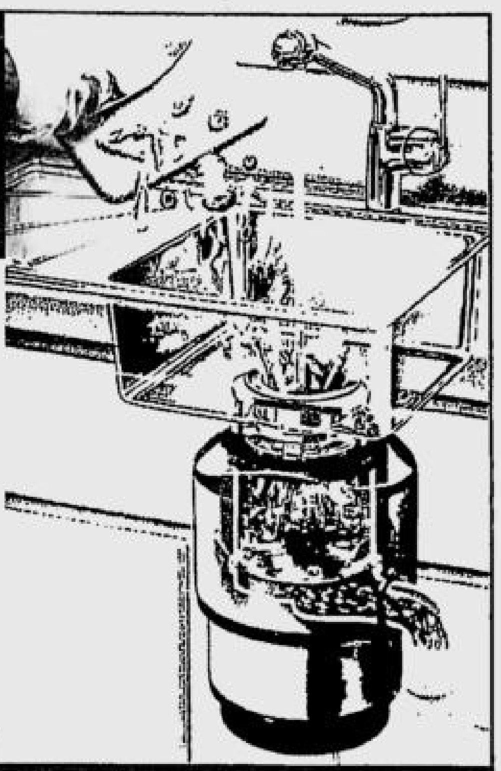

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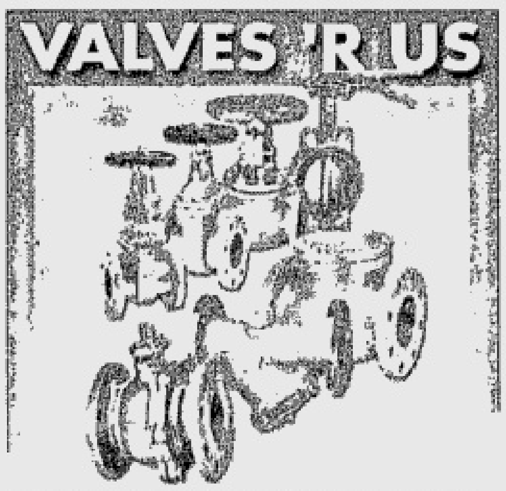

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TOM WILKINSON "In The Bedroom"

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Dad wants to take 'crown jewels' fight to Congress

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA councilor yesterday asked the city's six congressmen to take to Congress Manila City Hall's fight to recover the city's "crown jewels"—pieces of property that were taken away from the local government without any compensation through a presidential decree during the martial law years.

Don Ramon Bagatsing, the city council's minority leader, said he is throwing his support behind Mayor Lito Atieza in the effort to recover the Rizal Park, Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, the Manila Harbor and Intramuros.

The fourth district councilor shared Atienza's belief that the most viable way for the city government to recover the pieces of property is through the legislative and judicial processes.

The councilor wants Congress, through Manila representatives, to repeal or amend the presidential decrees and restore the properties to Manila.

He said Manila congressmen Harry Angping, Mark Jimenez, Nestor Ponce, Jaime Lopez, Ernesto Nieva and Joey Hizon "should start fighting for the interest of Manila."

"The least they could do is to amend the decrees by returning the properties," Bagatsing said.

And if that is not possible, the councilor proposed that the legislators could just grant the local government proper representation in the supervision of the properties, and restore to the city its share of the revenues generated.

The decrees, which have the strength of law, were issued by the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos in the late 1970s.

Presidential Decree No. 1284 gave to the Philippine Ports Authority the authority to manage and supervise the Manila North and South Harbors in 1978.

P.D. 1616 created the Intramuros Administration in 1979, giving the new agency the right to develop the Walled City, including Fort Santiago. The so-called Sunken Garden and the golf course, which used to be the moat around Intramuros, were ceded to the Philippine Tourism Authority in 1981 by P.D. 1763.

The Rizal Park is under the National Parks Development Committee, while Rizal Memorial Stadium is under the Philippine Sports Commission.

Bagatsing contended that the city was never compensated from the transfers of property and jurisdiction, as provided in the decrees.

Moreover, he added, not one city official "was audacious enough then to demand compensation (for the properties) during those fearful years."

Bagatsing was referring to the Marcos authoritarian regime.

"Not only did the city lose income from these properties, its historical and cultural heritage was also taken away," he said.

Stiff fines await Manila bird catchers

By Jerome Aning

A MANILA councilor wants to impose stiffer fines on illegal bird catchers using any sort of trapping device in parks and wooded areas in the city.

Councilor Luciano "Lou" Veloso said the conservation and maintenance of tree parks in the city should also include protection of the birds and other creatures inhabiting them.

He said he was particularly aghast when he learned that some residents, including children, are still hunting birds for game in the parks.

Under his proposed ordinance, those caught injuring or hunting birds through the use of any trapping device will be punished with a P1,000-fine.

The amount is increased by P500 for second offenses.

The third and succeeding offenses will carry additional penalties of imprisonment for seven days, if the court decides.

All barangay officials are authorized to implement the ordinance and remit the collected fines to the city treasurer's office.

Veloso's bill is being studied by the City Council's committees on laws and on environment and ecological protection.

What's wrong with GMA's TV gimmick?

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

"THEY have taken away my office. They have taken away my dignity. And (now) they will take away my life," said deposed President Erap.

He forgot to mention one thing: they have also taken away his Petrus, a French wine worth P60,000 per bottle, which he drank to his heart's content almost every night with cronies when he was still president. Erap and his cronies consumed two boxes of Petrus in one sitting, according to a businessman who bought the very expensive wine in Hong Kong.

While the people in Payatas and Parola, who are his rabid supporters, were eating rice and bagoong or hardly ate at all, Erap was drinking Petrus and nibbling biscuits topped with caviar at the Palace and some hideouts.

***

Compare Erap's fare to that of GMA and her family's lunch in Malacañang one Sunday, and their style of living.

GMA and her family's lunch consisted of a bowl of rice for each member, soup and cocido, and nothing else. Cocido is Spanish cuisine consisting of boiled meat with vegetables. In Tagalog, it's called *nilagang karne*.

What was plentiful in that lunch were the topics of conversation at the table. I should know, I was in that lunch, my second in Malacañang.

Who says the President and her family don't live simply?

***

I asked Dato, GMA's youngest child who's taking up law, how he long he'd been into target shooting. He said not long.

He said he used a .45 caliber pistol made by a local company. Told that it was not as good as US-made pistols, Dato snapped back: "*Kasi mura lang po siya, maganda naman ang performance at dito pa gawa.*"

By that statement, Dato showed his simplicity as well as nationalism.

***

The simple living of the members of the President's family is not a put on.

Consider: Lulli, GMA's second child, does not wear expensive signature clothes even if she can afford to buy them. She wears clothes bought from ukay-ukay or second-hand ready-to-wear stores. And you know what? She was not ashamed to admit it publicly!

First Gentleman Mike Arroyo still goes to the same barber shop in Manila which he has been patronizing since he was still courting GMA. *Kuripot pa rin daw magbigay ng* tip, according to someone who knows the President's husband very well.

***

Compare them to Jinggoy Estrada, Erap's eldest son by Senator Loi.

Jinggoy, according to people who know him, lost millions of pesos in the casinos in Manila, Clark and Subic.

"*Tumatawa lang kung natatalo*," said one casino habitue.

***

GMA's critics say her recent appeal for unity, aired over government TV networks and some radio stations, was a cheap shot at making herself look good to the people.

What's wrong with a little gimmickry to stress an important point? Every Philippine president, at one time or another, came out with gimmicks to endear himself to the citizenry.

Magsaysay was always seen in news photos putting his hand on the shoulder of poor people who approached him while he was visiting the provinces. What the public didn't know was what some of those poor folk were made to pose with the "Guy."

***

But why blame GMA for trying to make a good impression on the poor public? She was made to wear blue denims by her handlers to make her look down-to-earth on TV. When US presidential candidate John F. Kennedy appeared on television to debate with Richard Nixon, he wore a shirt and tie that were appealing to the viewers. Kennedy, of course, won that election in the early 1960s.

The President was sincere in appealing for unity. She was honest enough to admit to the citizenry that she was having difficulty with her job.

The President was asking for understanding from the sector of society that still has not warmed up to her—the very poor whose hearts still belong to Erap.

***

Sen. Panfilo Lacson did not show up at the Senate hearing which was attended by some top officials of the Philippine National Police (PNP), including his nemesis, Chief Supt. Reynaldo Berroya. Director Reynaldo Wycoco of the National Bureau of Investigation was also there.

The hearing was called as a result of Lacson's "exposé" about some PNP to top brass being under the payroll of gambling lords.

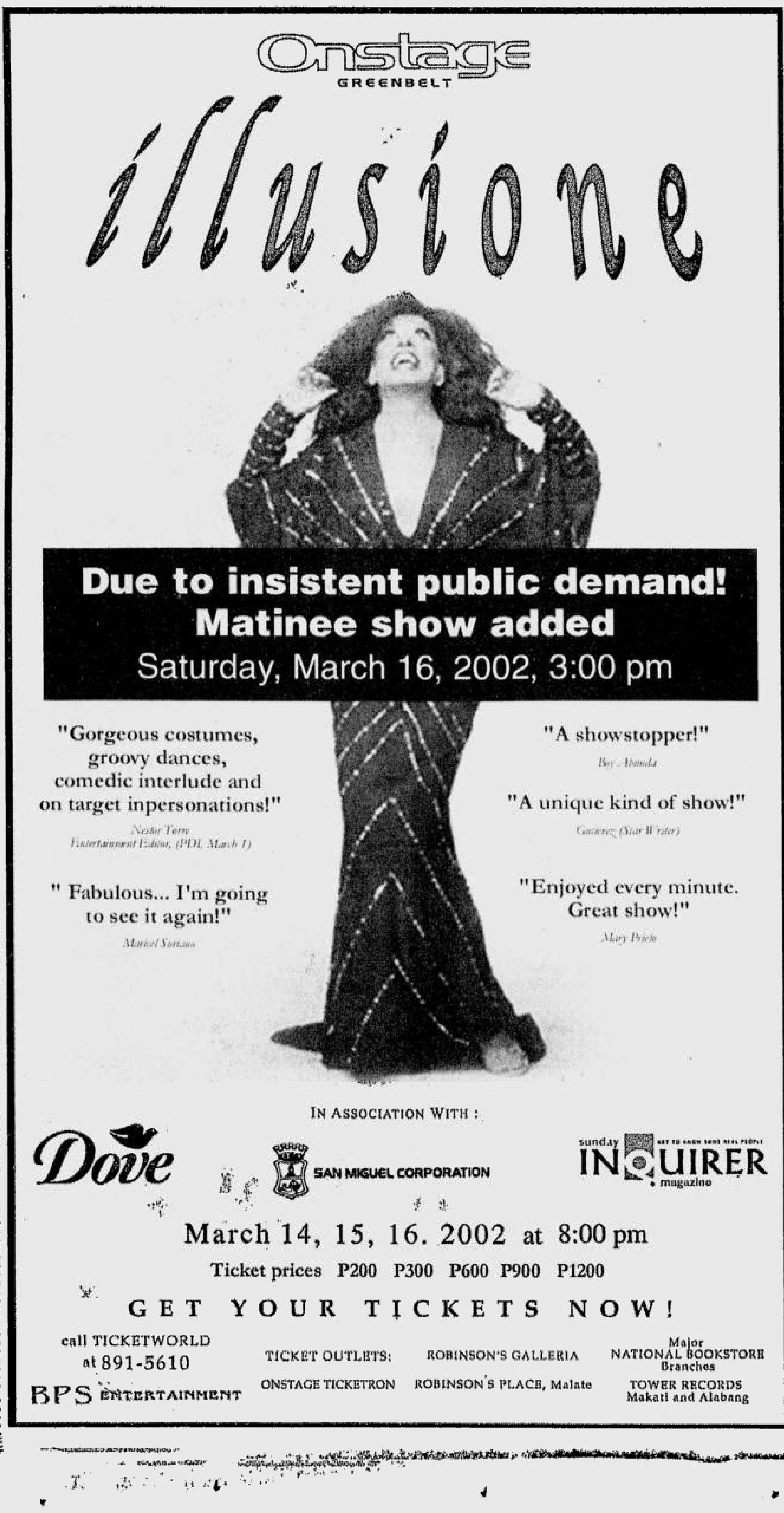
But why wasn't Lacson a no-show at the hearing which was brought about by his accusation against his former PNP subordinates?

***

The answer is simple: the former PNP chief did not want to face the people that he was accusing. He was especially fearful of Berroya's presence.

But why was he afraid? Because when he was PNP chief he could not stop *jueteng* altogether. Even those close to him were also on the take from the gambling lords.

Putak ka ng putak, ayaw mo namang panindigan ang sinabi mo, kagalang-galang na Senador!



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Dead over *cara y cruz*

LABORER Raul Ballenos did not live to see the dawn on Sunday after Joel Nicolas, and Erick Ramirez, of Onyx Interior, San Andres Bukid, repeatedly stabbed him after they fought over *cara y cruz* during a wake in Manila.

Ballenos, 24, of 2485 Radium St., San Andres Bukid, Manila, attended a wake at the Nicolas residence Friday night and got into an argument with suspect Nicolas when the victim turned over a table the guests were using for *cara y cruz*, said Detective Benito A. Cabatbat, of the Western Police District-homicide section.

Other guests stepped in to stop Nicolas and Ballenos from tearing each other apart, police said.

At about 3 a.m. Sunday, the two men met again at the corner of Estrada and Radium streets in San Andres Bukid.

Ballenos tried to run away from the suspect, but he did not see the other man waiting for him with a knife drawn.

Cabatbat said Ramirez suddenly appeared and stabbed the victim twice in the back.

As Ballenos fell on the pavement, Ramirez went on to kick the victim, Cabatbat said.

Ballenos tried to get up and escape, but Nicolas held the victim by his T-shirt and banged his body against a parked pedicab, Cabatbat added.

With his knife already bloodied, Ramirez plunged it in the victim a second time before he and Nicolas escaped.

Ballenos was taken to the Ospital ng Maynila where he died while undergoing surgery, Cabatbat said.

The police are now hot on the trail of the culprits, he said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, March 12, 2002
4th Week of Lent
1st Reading: Ezk 47:1-9, 12
Gospel: Jn 5:1-3, 5-16

There was a feast of the Jews and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now, by the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, there is a pool (called Bethzatha in Hebrew) surrounded by five galleries. In these galleries lay a multitude of sick people—blind, lame and paralyzed.

(All were waiting for the water to move, for at times an angel of the Lord would descend into the pool and stir up the water; and the first person to enter after this movement of the water would be healed of whatever disease that person had.)

There was a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus saw him, and since he knew how long this man had been lying there, he said to him, "Do you want to be healed?" And the sick man answered, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is disturbed; so while I am still on my way, another steps down before me."

Jesus then said to him, "Stand up, take your mat and walk." And at once the man was healed, and he took up his mat and walked.

Now that day happened to be the sabbath. So the Jews said to the man who had just been healed, "It is the sabbath and the Law doesn't allow you to carry your mat." He answered them, "The one who healed me said to me: Take up your mat and walk." They asked him, "Who is the one who said to you: Take up your mat and walk?" But the sick man had no idea who it was who had cured him, for Jesus had slipped away among the crowd that filled the place.

Afterwards Jesus met him in the Temple court and told him, "Now you are well; don't sin again, lest something worse happen to you." And the man went back and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had healed him. So the Jews persecuted Jesus because he performed healings like that on the sabbath.

Commentary

The gospel of John will guide our daily journey now, right through to Holy Week and Easter. John shows the shadows lengthening for Jesus as his enemies gather their forces. At the same time he presents our risen Lord, savior and healer, the Christ who gives new life through the sacrament of baptism, and calls to conversion: "Now that you are well, don't sin again." The first reading picks up the baptismal theme: "Wherever the water goes it brings health, and life teems wherever the river flows... because this water comes from the sanctuary." Lent originated as a period of preparation for baptism: identification with Christ in his dying and rising to new life. Cherish the grace of your baptism, by making the daily scripture a springboard for dialogue with Christ. "Do you want to be healed?" he asks. Continue the conversation.

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Japanese, Filipino students robbed

THREE students, two of them Japanese and one a Filipino from the University of the Philippines, were robbed in front of the Quiapo Church while they were on their way to a farewell party of Japanese exchange students in Manila.

UP student Florinda Palma-Gil, 21, of UP Bliss Building 19 Unit 21, San Vicente, Diliman, Quezon City, and Japanese Cheeko Tokuyen, 20, an exchange student from the Suha University, and Masako Moriwahe, 21, a cross-registrant in UP from Suha, were robbed by four unidentified men last week, police said.

The victims lost three cellular phones worth P16,000, and a P6,000 Canon camera, said a report at the Western Police District's General Assignment Section.

Police said the incident happened around 9 p.m. in front of the Quiapo Church while the students were on board a southbound FX taxi.

Philip Tubeza

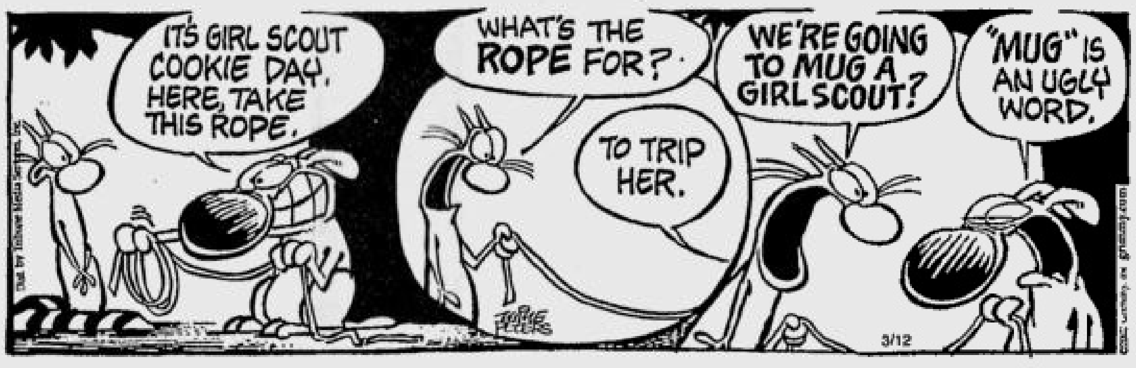
SUPREME COURT GUIDELINES

CRIMINAL LAW (JUSTIFYING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Self defense—A plea of self defense shits the burder of proof to the defense because the accused then admits having committed the criminal act and only disclaims liability on the ground that his life had been exposed to harm. The accused must rely on the strength of his own evidence and not on the weakness of the prosecution's evidence, for even of the latter were weak it could not be disbelieved after the accused had admitted the killing. The accused must establish the following requisites by clear and convincing evidence: (a) unlawful aggression on the part of the victim; (b) reasonable necessity of the means employed to present or repel such aggression; and (c) lack of sufficient provocation on the part of the accused. Of these requisites, unlawful aggression, i.e., the sudden unprovoked attack on the person defending himself, is indispensable. This is because the theory of self-defense is based on the necessity on the part of the person being attacked to prevent or repel the aggression. [Citations omitted.] [Justice Mendoza, Second Division, People v. Iglesia, G. R. No. 132354, September 13, 2001]

DIGEST BY R. B. VERA

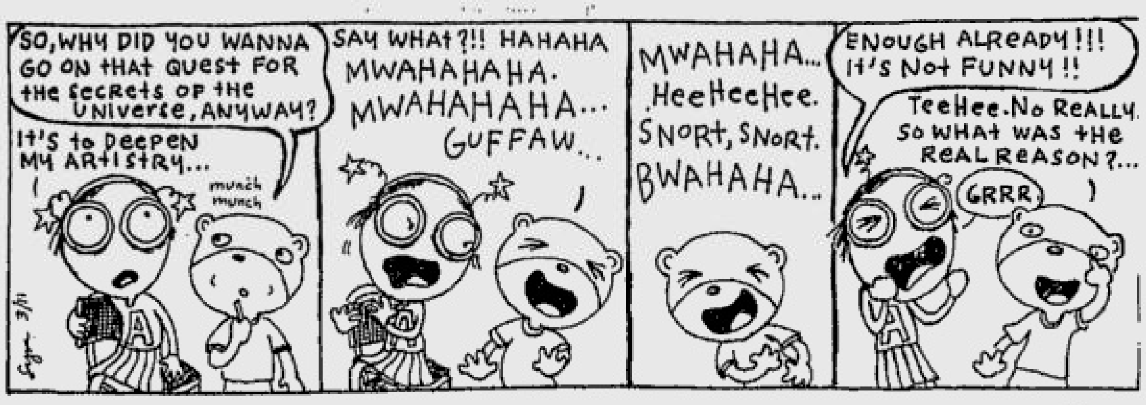
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


IT'S GIRL SCOUT COOKIE DAY. HERE, TAKE THIS ROPE.
WHAT'S THE ROPE FOR?
TO TRIP HER.
WE'RE GOING TO MUG A GIRL SCOUT?
"MUG" IS AN UGLY WORD.
3/12

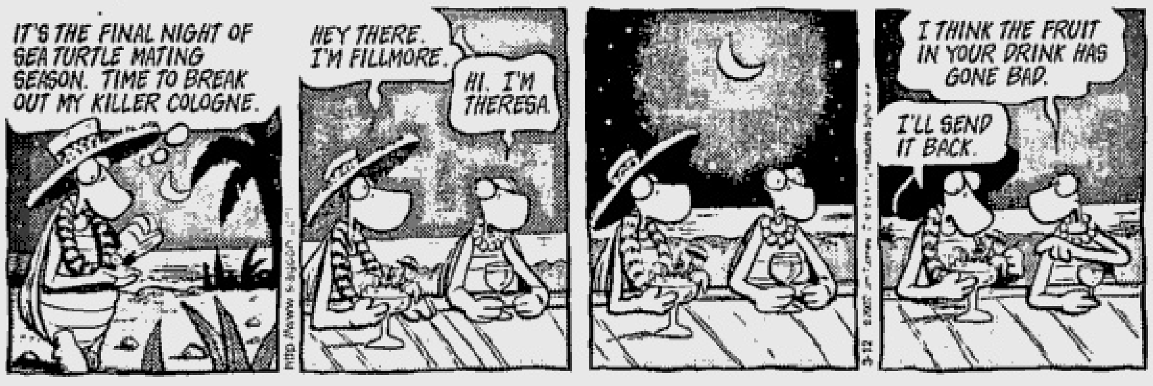
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO, WHY DID YOU WANNA GO ON THAT QUEST FOR THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE, ANYWAY?
IT'S TO DEEPEN MY ARTISTRY...
munch munch
SAY WHAT?!! HAHAHA MWAHAHAHAHA. MWAHAHAHAHA... GUFFAW...
MWAHAHA... HeeHeeHee. SNORT, SNORT. BWAHAHA...
ENOUGH ALREADY!!! IT'S NOT FUNNY!!
TeeHee. No REALLY. SO WHAT WAS THE REAL REASON?...
GRRR

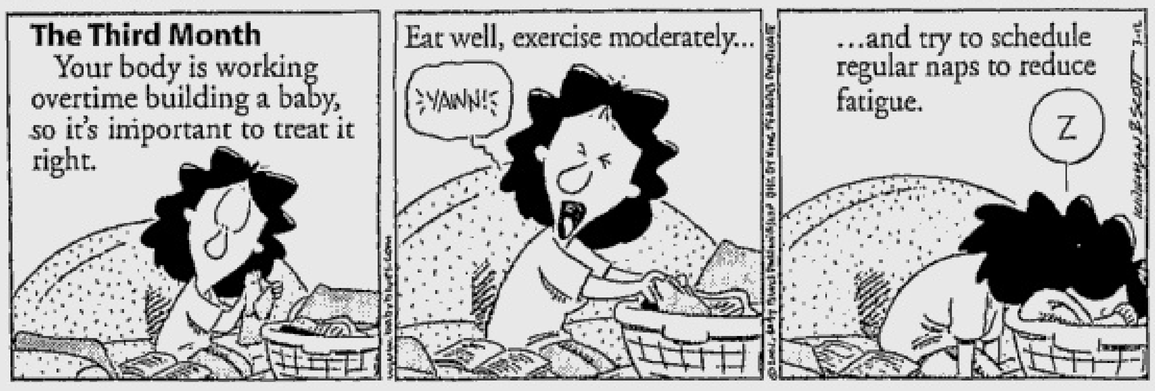
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


IT'S THE FINAL NIGHT OF SEA TURTLE MATING SEASON. TIME TO BREAK OUT MY KILLER COLOGNE.
HEY THERE. I'M FILLMORE.
HI. I'M THERESA.
I THINK THE FRUIT IN YOUR DRINK HAS GONE BAD.
I'LL SEND IT BACK.

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


The Third Month
Your body is working overtime building a baby, so it's important to treat it right.
Eat well, exercise moderately...
YAWN!
...and try to schedule regular naps to reduce fatigue.
Z

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Liza Minnelli, James Taylor, Andrew Young

Happy Birthday: You may feel comfortable with what you do professionally, but expect to be thrown a curveball at work this year. You will make your best effort when the playing field is changing, so don't shy away. This is a year for change so don't be reluctant to make the first move. Take action and make your dreams come true. Your numbers are 18, 26, 29, 34, 37, 41

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Focus on your home, family investments and personal property today.. A greater bond with an older relative will lead to valuable information.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Your friends will play an important role in your life today. Someone you have known for a long time will shed some light on a situation that you aren't seeing clearly.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Put your effort into your work. If you try to deal with personal issues you are likely to end up in an emotional mess. It is best to keep your comments to yourself.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may not like to venture too far from home but if you get the opportunity to travel you should go. You will discover new interests and learn about different backgrounds.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Home renovations or investing in property or something for your home will all pay off. You can make good deals or even make headway with a pending legal problem that you may be facing.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You can make your move today when it comes to your personal life. Partnerships can be started or rekindled. Stand up and let your feelings be known.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): The time is right to make a contribution. You have original ideas and a strong sense of how to solve any problems that arise, so speak up and get the ball rolling. This is an ideal day to ask for a raise or follow your professional dreams.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): You will gravitate toward unusual forms of entertainment. Your desire to try new things will lead you into all sorts of interesting scenarios. You will meet people who can offer you some interesting alternatives.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Be careful that you don't upset someone you are close to. Focus on investments that are solid and will lead to security and a better financial future.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Your quick wit and logical way of dealing with things will bring you acclaim. You will enjoy having interaction with those from totally different backgrounds.

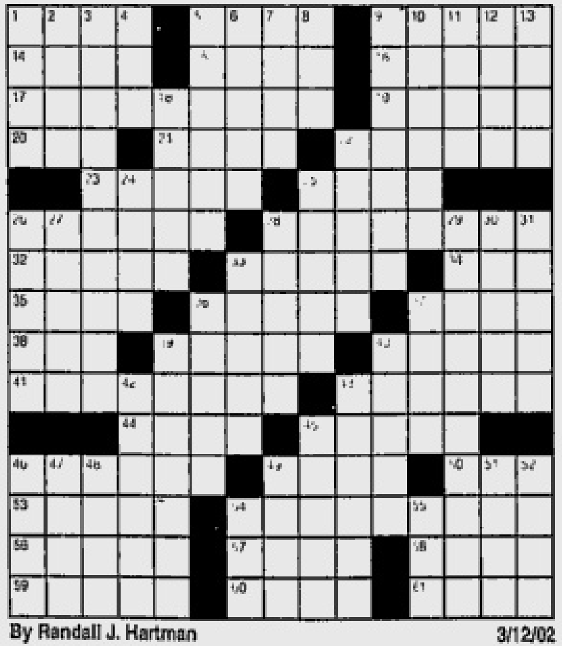
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): If you want to make changes to your current direction you should consider doing so today. Opportunities are present; all you have to do is take advantage of them.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): You may be a little sensitive today if you let someone you care about get to you. Protect yourself from those individuals who speak before they think.

Birthday Baby: You will thrive when it comes to intellectual pursuits. Your strong will and determination will take you where you want to go throughout life.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Randall J. Hartman
Escondido, CA

3/12/02

ACROSS
1 Bride shade
5 Farm tool
9 Royal George
14 "Rule Britannia" composer
15 Queen of Olympus
16 Creepy
17 Slumber party
19 Walled city near Madrid
20 S.E. Hinton novel
21 Angler's gear
22 Missing-persons investigator
23 Clan
25 Uh...excuse me
26 Walked vigorously
28 Interstate bridge
32 Actress Dunne
33 Lock
34 "Citizen Kane" studio
35 "Uncle ___ Cabin"
36 Chaplain
37 Ruckus
38 Verse starter?
39 Creates
40 Skin cream
41 Eight-day holiday
43 Weapons store
44 Auspices
45 42D in French
46 Climbed
49 "Typee" sequel
50 Anatomical duct
53 Hammerin' Hank
54 Wake up late
56 Rolling Stones hit, "__ It Black"
57 M. Descartes
58 Poet Teasdale
59 Glitches
60 Conclusions
61 Performing couples

DOWN
1 Immense
2 Perry's creator
3 Near death
4 Director Spike
5 Buffay of "Friends"
6 Embankment
7 City on the Oka
8 Military science
9 Porters
10 Make over
11 Guitarist Clapton
12 Mah-jongg piece
13 Rip
18 "__ and Prejudice"
22 Guess Who song, "__ Eyes"
24 Howard and Silver
25 Maintains
26 Ab exercise
27 Sodium carbonate
28 Court call?
29 Style of Gaudi
30 Alberto Tomba or Tommy Moe
31 'bout that
33 Occupied
36 Like highways
37 Considerable
39 Points in time
40 Threesomes
42 See ya!
43 Worships
45 Remedy
46 Tree juices
47 Star of "Misery"
48 Puccini tune
49 Stove chamber
51 Space starter?
52 Evian and Vichy
54 Prospector's find
55 Leary's drug

Monday's Puzzle Solved

E	D	A	M		S	P	E	N	D		J	I	M	I
B	O	L	O		A	I	R	E	R		A	C	A	D
B	L	O	O	D	Y	M	A	R	Y		N	O	T	A
S	T	E	R	E	O		T	U	R	B	I	N	E	S
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O	D	O	R		R	A	P			N	A	S	A	L
C	O	C	K	T	A	I	L	S	F	O	R	T	W	O
C	R	U	S	H			Y	O	U		G	E	E	S
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A	R	A	L		G	A	S	P	S		B	O	S	S

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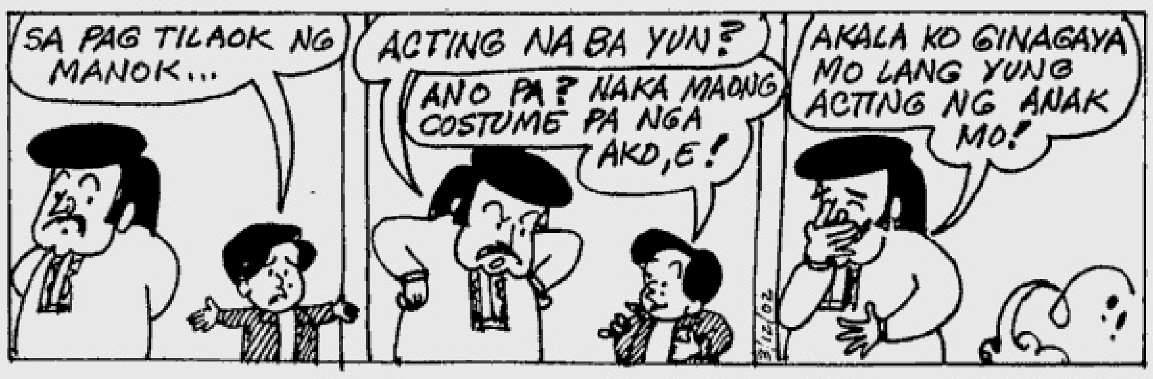
3/12/02

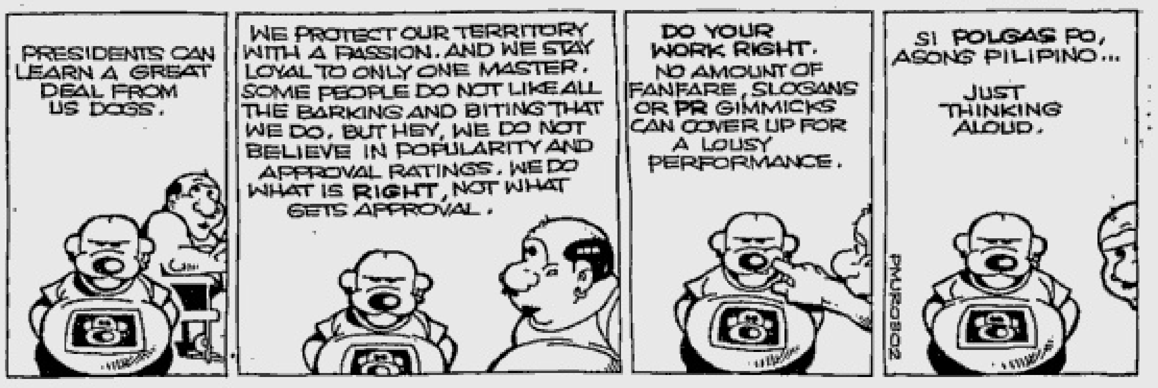
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SA PAG TILAOK NG MANOK...
ACTING NA BA YUN?
ANO PA? NAKA MAONG COSTUME PA NGA AKO, E!
AKALA KO GINAGAYA MO LANG YUNG ACTING NG ANAK MO!
3/12/02

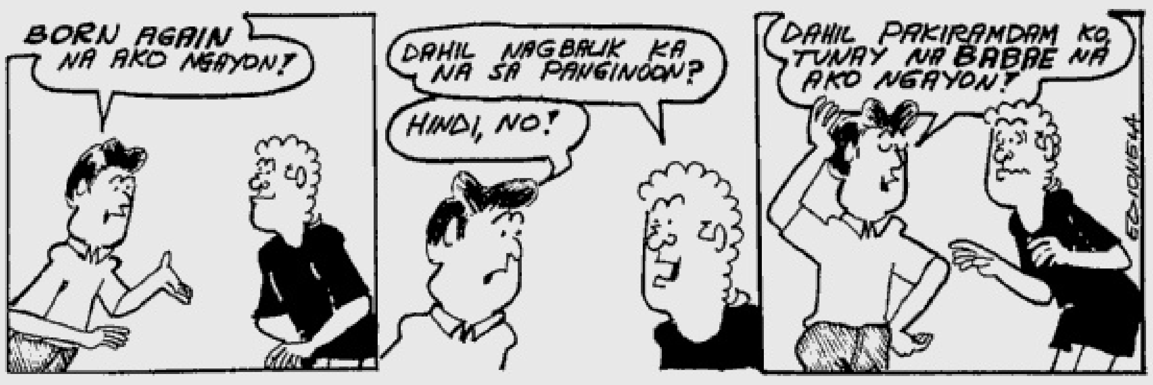
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PRESIDENTS CAN LEARN A GREAT DEAL FROM US DOGS.
WE PROTECT OUR TERRITORY WITH A PASSION. AND WE STAY LOYAL TO ONLY ONE MASTER. SOME PEOPLE DO NOT LIKE ALL THE BARKING AND BITING THAT WE DO. BUT HEY, WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN POPULARITY AND APPROVAL RATINGS. WE DO WHAT IS RIGHT, NOT WHAT GETS APPROVAL.
DO YOUR WORK RIGHT. NO AMOUNT OF FANFARE, SLOGANS OR PR GIMMICKS CAN COVER UP FOR A LOUSY PERFORMANCE.
SI POLGAS PO, ASONG PILIPINO... JUST THINKING ALOUD.
PMJR0302

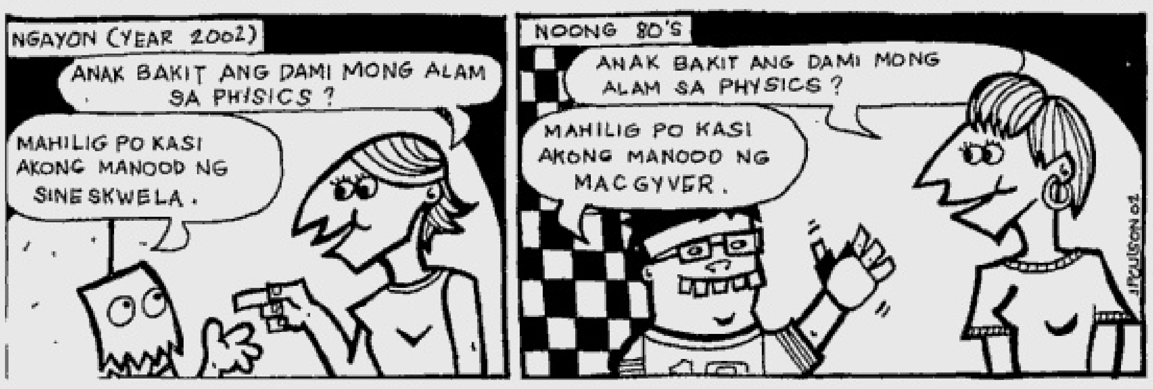
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


BORN AGAIN NA AKO NGAYON!
DAHIL NAGBALIK KA NA SA PANGINOON?
HINDI, NO!
DAHIL PAKIRAMDAM KO, TUNAY NA BABAE NA AKO NGAYON!
EDIONELA

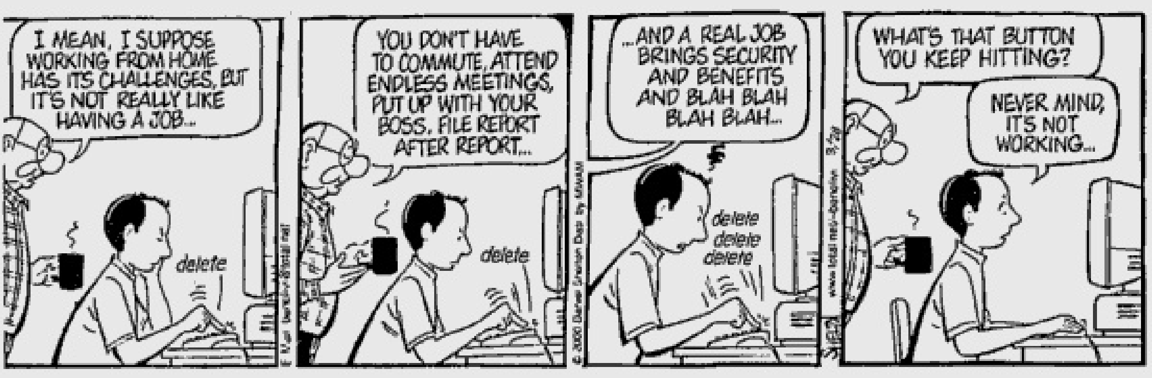
GARAPATA BLOOD

BY JOHN PAUL CUISON


NGAYON (YEAR 2002)
ANAK BAKIT ANG DAMI MONG ALAM SA PHISICS?
MAHILIG PO KASI AKONG MANOOD NG SINESKWELA.
NOONG 80'S
ANAK BAKIT ANG DAMI MONG ALAM SA PHYSICS?
MAHILIG PO KASI AKONG MANOOD NG MACGYVER.
JPCUISON 02

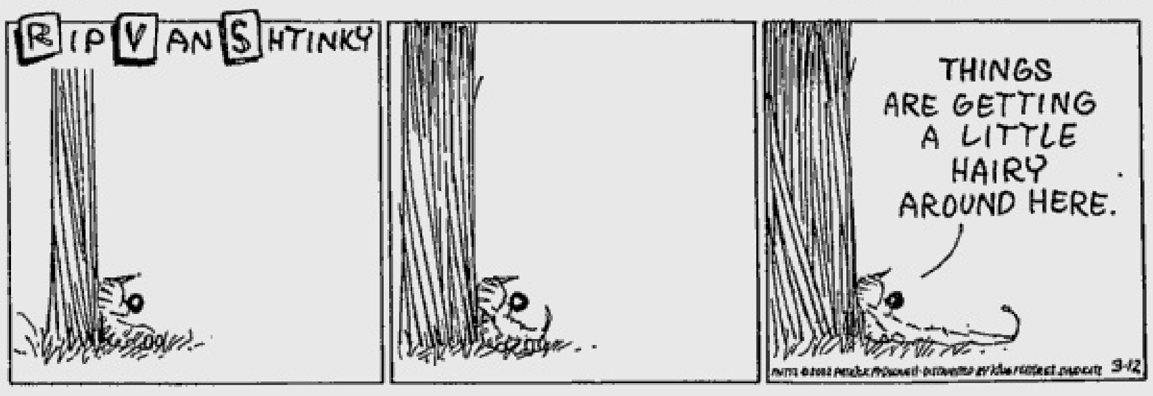
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I MEAN, I SUPPOSE WORKING FROM HOME HAS ITS CHALLENGES, BUT IT'S NOT REALLY LIKE HAVING A JOB...
delete
YOU DON'T HAVE TO COMMUTE, ATTEND ENDLESS MEETINGS, PUT UP WITH YOUR BOSS, FILE REPORT AFTER REPORT...
delete
...AND A REAL JOB BRINGS SECURITY AND BENEFITS AND BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH...
delete delete delete
WHAT'S THAT BUTTON YOU KEEP HITTING?
NEVER MIND, IT'S NOT WORKING...

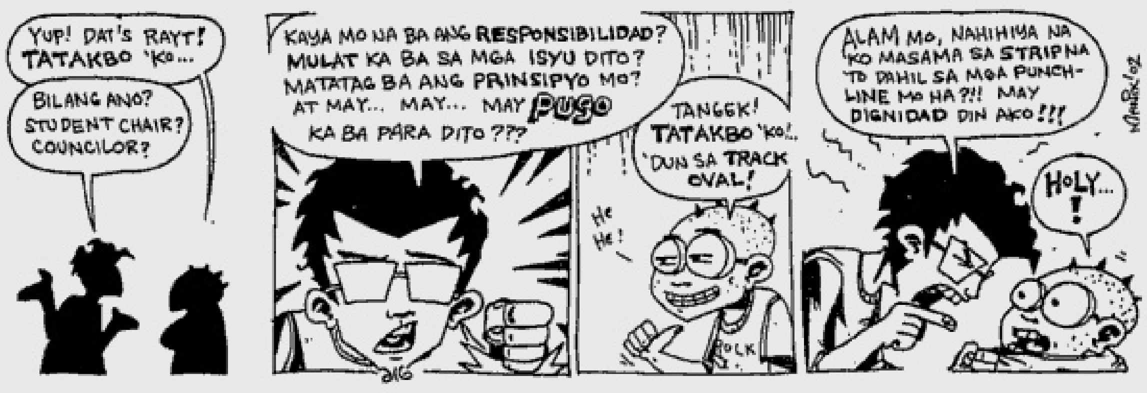
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


RIP VAN SHTINKY
THINGS ARE GETTING A LITTLE HAIRY AROUND HERE.
3-12

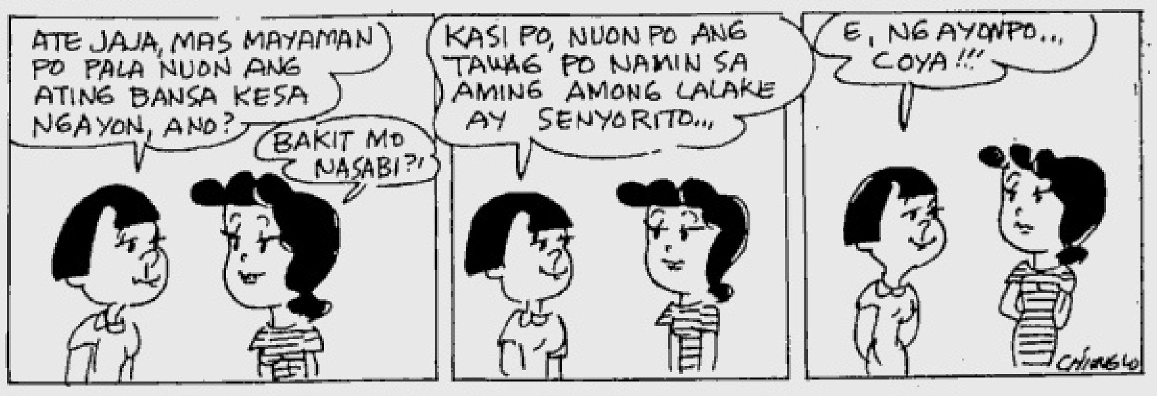
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


YUP! DAT'S RAYT! TATAKBO 'KO...
BILANG ANO? STUDENT CHAIR? COUNCILOR?
KAYA MO NA BA ANG RESPONSIBILIDAD? MULAT KA BA SA MGA ISYU DITO? MATATAG BA ANG PRINSIPYO MO? AT MAY... MAY... MAY PUSO KA BA PARA DITO???
TANGEK! TATAKBO 'KO!.. 'DUN SA TRACK OVAL!
He He!
ALAM MO, NAHIHIYA NA 'KO MASAMA SA STRIP NA 'TO DAHIL SA MGA PUNCH-LINE MO HA?!! MAY DIGNIDAD DIN AKO!!!
HOLY... !

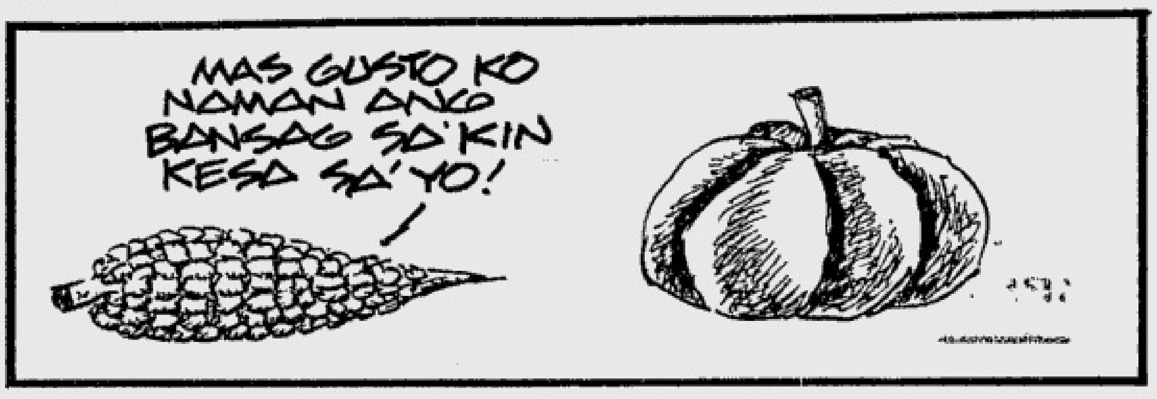
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ATE JAJA, MAS MAYAMAN PO PALA NUON ANG ATING BANSA KESA NGAYON, ANO?
BAKIT MO NASABI?!
KASI PO, NUON PO ANG TAWAG PO NAMIN SA AMING AMONG LALAKE AY SENYORITO...
E, NGAYON PO... COYA!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


MAS GUSTO KO NAMAN ANG BANSAG SA'KIN KESA SA'YO!

'PINAKAMAMAHAL'

Aiza tries to better a chartbuster

By Remy M. Umerez

THERE are special people and there are special places.

For Aiza Seguerra, the special people are the entire product and promotions staff of Vicor under MG Mozo, the people who patronized her initial album which to date has turned quintuple platinum in sales, and her parents who extended their loving support.

As to Aiza's special place, there is Uva, the cozy restaurant between Virgin Café and Mother Lily's Imperial Palace on Timog Avenue and Tomas Morato. Her debut album, which spawned the phenomenal hit "Pagdating Ng Panahon," was launched in Uva a year ago.

Recently, Vicor gathered at Uva all the people who matter to her to launch Aiza's new album, lovingly titled "Pinakamamahal."

Watching the album launch is like sitting on the front row of Music Museum and seeing Aiza perform live.

Steven Tan, the newly appointed president of Vicor, delivered the opening remarks. He said Vicor, as the home of Original Pilipino Music, will continue to produce only the best in homegrown music.

Love in all its various aspects is what "Pinakamamahal" is about. It features 10 outstanding cuts (all with guitar chords) which were carefully chosen to suit the taste of Aiza's followers, from the young ones to the young once and the young at heart.

The album is a mix of original songs and revivals, some of which were sung live by Aiza, who played her guitar during the launch.

HITMAKER Aiza Seguerra with her new boss, Vicor president Steven Tan.

The first song Aiza interpreted was "Ikaw Na ang Bahala." It is actually a prayer set to music. Aiza said they always begin a recording session with a prayer.

The next is the title cut "Pinakamamahal," probably the most romantic song in the album. It can easily become a staple at weddings.

Musical geniuses Moy Ortiz and Edith Gallardo, the same ones who are responsible for the chartbuster "Pagdating Ng Panahon," wrote "Kapag mga Puso ang Naguusap," "Palagay Ko Mahal Kita" and "Akala Mo." The last one is the carrier single of the new album.

Aiza may have a winner in "Akala Mo." More than a love song, it also has a catchy melody that can be more easily recalled than, say, "Pagdating Ng Panahon."

Everything you want to say to someone special but can't is captured in "Pakisabi na Lang," a song originally played by The CompanY.

"True Love" is a love song Bing Crosby crooned to Grace Kelly in the movie "High Society." Patti Austin has her version, and Aiza chose to include the classic Cole Porter piece in her album because it is the theme song of her parents, Mama Caring and Papa Dick.

Another revival is "Till There was You," which was featured in the musical "The Music Man" and interpreted by Shirley Jones. A most requested song from Aiza is "Power of Two," and a lot of people think she did well with her version.

Aiza hushed the crowd when she performed "Sa Ugoy ng Duyan" a capella. She almost reduced everyone to tears.

To promote the album, a full blast tri-media campaign has kicked off. Leading radio stations in Metro Manila started airing "Akala Mo." The TV launch was set for March 9 on the noontime show "Eat Bulaga."

Aiza will take to the malls anew to promote the album. She is scheduled to visit SM Bacoor on March 16, Robinson's Pampanga on March 17, Robinson's Imus on March 23, Robinson's Ermita on March 24 and Farmer's Cubao on March 31.

Album producer Margot Gallardo said: "'Pagdating Ng Panahon' was an overwhelming success in terms of sales and artistic achievement, but maintaining success in the music industry remains a delicate thing. It's not just where we've been, it's where we are going. Our goal is to make the best even better. I am so blessed with people who truly know and love music with a passion."

Beyond sunbathing and nature tripping

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

SEMANA SANTA, Holy Week, is just around the corner. In true Pinoy fashion, people will either be flocking to the beach or trekking up to Baguio. Where has the "holy" gone in Holy Week?

Personally when I'm undergoing a crisis I comfort myself with the thought that Jesus had to endure 14 stations of the cross so who am I to complain if I'm having heartbreak No. 5?

When you really take time out to study the Bible, whether it's Holy Week or not, you'll come to realize that much of the pain we experience are merely self-flagellation.

No need to go to the extent of having ourselves nailed on the cross, like some people do during Good Friday. Most of us are the do-it-yourself types when it comes to making life a misery.

For the stars, Holy Week is a welcome respite from their hectic schedules. I cornered some celebrities and asked them about their Lenten thoughts. Here's to a meaningful Holy Week, one that goes beyond sunbathing and nature-tripping.

Lorna Tolentino: My family and I go out of town to keep it solemn. We do the Way of the Cross and visit seven churches. I don't make any Lenten sacrifice. I just lose myself in prayer. For me, that's the most effective way to feel the essence of Holy Week. God has been good to me, and even if there have been trials along the way, I know that the Lord allowed it to happen for a reason. I never question Him. I have complete faith in Him. Even when it's not Holy Week I really pray a lot. It just gets more intense during Lent.

Korina Sanchez: I usually spend Holy Week in quiet places where I can just sit still, pray and repent. But during Easter Sunday we go to the beach to celebrate our Lord's resurrection. After pain comes glory and that's really reason to rejoice.

Ces Drilon: While Holy Week is meant for reflection and prayer, I must admit my family takes the opportunity to go on vacation. We are trying to establish a tradition of going to a new place in the Philippines at least twice a year. When we are out of town we visit the local church and try to take part in the local rituals of the place. One memorable trip was to Marinduque where we were able to witness the Moriones festival. It's also a good time for me to spend time with my sons. Last year, I brought them with me on a coverage of "Pipol" to Balut Island in Cavite where a group traditionally meets every Good Friday to test their amulets or *anting- anting.* It was a different kind of exposure for my boys. In other words, it's a mixture of reflection and pleasure.

Dina Bonnevie: I fast and meditate and read the Bible almost the whole day. I always set a new goal with regard to getting rid of a bad habit or change for the better.

Monsour del Rosario: I abstain from eating meat. I won't do anything but pray. For an active person like me, it's almost unthinkable that I just stay put in one place but when I start to meditate on how Jesus spent his life for 33 years, I'm so amazed that I just can't help but be thankful for everything He has done for mankind. My idol **Bruce Lee** lived for 32 years but his life story is nothing compared to Jesus' story. Our Savior's life is incomparable.

Ryan Agoncillo: It's always been simple for our family. Lent is the time to slow down, breathe, think, thank and smile.

Just asking

IS THE **Dominic Ochoa-Jannna Victoria**'s split-up for real? Hope it's just another case of lover's quarrel blown out of proportion. I've had many long talks with Dominic in the past and even if we don't get in touch often, the "Mindoro bond" we have remains intact. I can tell that Janna has made him mellow, so I'm saddened to hear about their split-up.

For someone like Dominic who's been on the roller-coaster of love for so long, having Janna is like finding the right tranquilizer to put an end to all the dizziness and confusion of past romances. I know that they already had marriage plans and I really hope this separation will make them realize that they can't live without each other. Sometimes you have to be apart to see what you had together.

How true are murmurs that **Rita Avila** will soon marry a TV director? If so, may their love story have a happy ending.

Personal

KUDOS to the very efficient city administrator of Mandaluyong (where I stay), **Victor Victoria**. But over and above your duties in the city, I hope you will take good care of Cathy T. or else . . . ha ha! Work hard but fall in love harder!

Domo arigato to **Jun Ebon** of Kamayan for the sumptuous salmon sashimi. Bless your kind heart.

For feeback, e-mail friends_at_dsquare@yahoo.com or wateringhole2000@yahoo.com

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Lani does concert series at Onstage

AFTER conquering such major venues at Araneta Coliseum and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, song goddess Lani Misalucha tries her hand at singing in a more intimate venue when she does her first concert series, "Lani Onstage: A Crossover Special."

SHOWS

Mounted by Crossover 105.1 FM, the six-night series is set for April 12, 13, 19, 20, 26 and 27, 9 p.m. at Onstage in Greenbelt, Makati City.

Crossover was the same producer behind Lani's successful Araneta Coliseum show.

Although she has been in the business for nearly five years, Lani has never done a concert series. The Onstage shows come on the heels of her performances in the US—at the Grand Olympic Auditorium in Los Angeles and the Cow Palace Arena in San Francisco, where she was the special guest in the concerts of Martin Nievera.

Lani also flew to New Jersey, where she did her own show at the Tropicana Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City.

Tickets for "Lani Onstage: A Crossover Special" are priced at P1,200, P900 and P600, are available at all major National Bookstore branches, Tower Records (Makati and Alabang), Robinson's Department Stores (Ortigas and Manila), Music Museum, CCP Box Office, Primeline (897-6170) and Ticketworld (891-5610).

For 24-hour ticket reservations and delivery, call 844-2947 or 844-8159.

SESSION musicians make up Q&A.

MISALUCHA. First concert series in a five-year career

Punchline turns 3

PUNCHLINE has become a favorite watering hole and gimmick venue in Quezon City. The place continues to draw crowds despite the onslaught of music bars in the area. It is at Punchline where you can see talented stand-up comedians and hosts in the live entertainment circuit.

Performers include Romell, Arnell, Martin, Vice, Rey Kilar, Hans, Minnie Aguilar, Anton, Ethel and Trizsa.

Punchline is turning three on April 16 with a big bash. It is open nightly from 7 p.m. to 3 a.m. Entertainment starts 9:30 p.m.

Punchline is located along Quezon Avenue in Quezon City.

VICE. Featured stand-up comedian at Punchline

March gigs

THE Q&A Band, led by award-winning composer and musical director Marvin Querido, with drummer Michael Alba and musician-album producer Chito Ilagan, lines up a series of live gigs this month.

The group will have repeat engagements at Tropical Forest along T.M. Kalaw st. on March 14 and 21. They will also perform at Hard Rock Café in Makati City on March 27.

On March 19 and 26, Q&A performs at Streetlife also in Makati, while on March 18 and 25, they will be at Strumm's Jupiter.

The band goes to Quezon City for a limited, two-night engagement at the Audiotorium on West Avenue on March 16 and 23.

The Q&A band is unique because all its members are accomplished session musicians. Most of them were members of other groups before coming together to form Q&A.

Group members are Kettle Mata (guitar), Rancis de Leon (sax), John Campo (trumpet), Toby Zapanta (trombone) and vocalists Jay Marquez, Anna Lisa del Valle, Oliver Samson Conda, Michael Yonting and Jay Javier.

Last month, Q&A did a post-Valentine concert at Country Waffles in Annapolis, where they were joined by comedienne Candy Pangilinan and new boy group Synch-O.

The band is managed by Enrique Lagoc and Henry Pawhay of Talentworks Entertainment Corporation.

Musical extravaganza

COUNTRY Waffles presents an exciting lineup of musical extravaganza this month.

At Eastwood City Walk, "Jammin' @ Country Waffles" continues with Romy Jorolan band and Snare on Wednesdays, Four Fourths and Snare on Thursdays, Folkus on Fridays and Quest on Saturdays. Show time is 9:30 p.m.

Country Waffles at Rockwell's Power Plant Mall goes "Soft Music" with Ryan Villamor and Dexter Espina on Fridays. Romy Posadas provides easy-listening tunes on Saturdays. Shows start 9 p.m.

For reservations, call 898-0308 to 09.

Top UK acts

ON Saturday, March 16, the Manila scene will be taken by storm as Big Fish International and MTV Philippines bring in the hottest dance music act in the world, "Chicane Live," at the Casino Filipino Amphitheater.

Big Fish, already known to many as the pioneer promoters of the Manila club scene and responsible for bringing to the country world-renowned dance club brands Cream, Slinky, Godskitchen and Gatecrasher, takes the partying to another level as it ties up with MTV Philippines for this particular event.

Chicane, a.k.a. Nick Bracegirdle, has been acclaimed as one of the UK's hottest writer/producer since his release of "Offshore" hit the charts in December 1996, selling over 100,000 copies on the UK alone. He took Ibiza by storm when he appeared in over 130 compilations.

Big Fish will also fly in DJ and producer Rowan Blades, a.k.a. Breeder and or Pariah to play after Chicane and close the party.

Gates open at 9 p.m. Chicane set starts 1 a.m.

ONE-NIGHT GIG

Catch South Border perform Wednesday night at Virgin Café in Tomas Morato, Quezon City. The group will render non-stop R&B hits and their signature songs like "Kahit Kailan," "Love of my Life" and "Habang Atin Ang Gabi" among many others. The show is presented by Nestea Iced Tea.

City Lite treats winner of Valentine promo

CITY Lite 88.3 treated the winners of its annual Valentine Promo, "A Jazzy Valentine Rendezvous" and its special friends to a night of great food, music and the perfect romantic ambience.

Ordinary is definitely not the word to describe City Lite 88.3's recent event. In fact it was anything but that.

RADIO

The venue was transformed into a setting reminiscent of the 1950's clubs of New York, Chicago and San Francisco. It was truly a night of elegance as the gentlemen came in their finest suits and escorted their ladies that sparkled in their chic evening gowns.

For dinner, everyone sat down to a candlelit five-course meal and was serenaded by two of the country's top jazz performers, Lynn Sherman and the Parliament Syndicate.

Repertoire included timeless classics and love songs mostly from the '50s and '60s, as well as contemporary favorites.

Busy entertaining the guests were City Lite station manager Pinky Aseron, special projects manager Annette Peñaranda, sales group head Susan San Pascual, with the other City Lite 88.3 staff and crew.

Weekly program

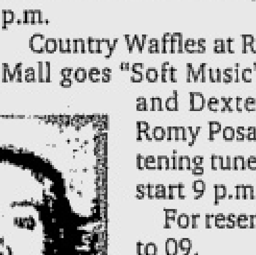
GOV. Ayong S. Maliksi tackled traffic, the drug menace and the peace and order situation in his province in the second airing of his weekly Sunday radio program, "Good A.M. Cavite" on 558 RMN News Manila.

Maliksi's co-anchor is John Susi.

"Traffic is one topic that both interests and infuriates all motorists and commuters coming from or passing through Cavite," Maliksi said.

"Businessmen based in the province used to cry over the state of traffic we have, for they need to move their products fast or at least one hour from their area of operations to the airport or pier."

Although Maliksi's deployment of especially-trained traffic aides partially eases the notorious choke points along Aguinaldo Highway, the governor said it is not the long-term solution to the problem.



MALIKSI

In his radio show, Maliksi revealed the details of a program designed to totally eradicate traffic problems in Cavite, with the help of Cavite PNP Director Col. Sammy Pagdilao.

In the first airing of "Good A.M. Cavite," Maliksi was overwhelmed by the volume of phone-in questions and text messages that poured in during the question-and-answer segment of the program.

Listeners may call up 671-3558 or 671-4231 during the said segment.

Available cell phone numbers will be announced during the program.

FPJ fellowship workshop graduation set March 17

THE GRADUATION of the three-month FPJ Fellowship Workshop on basic, advance and alternative scriptwriting is set for Sunday, March 17, at the Mowelfund Plaza in Quezon City.

The workshop is sponsored by action king Fernando Poe Jr. and conducted by the Screenwriters Guild of the Philippines, with Buddy Palad as officer in charge.

Veteran director-scriptwriter Meek Roxas in the inspirational speaker during the graduation rites, where Fernando Poe Jr. has been invited as guest of honor.

GMA 7 sitcom

SUNSHINE Dizon and the Hung Hunks (Isko, Gene P, Eddie Pe, Jeffrey Tam) will join the wacky cast of "Kool Ka Lang," as the sitcom takes viewers to Boracay, 9 tonight on GMA 7.

As the trip gives the group a feel of paradise, Boracay enables Jack and Gina to deepen their love for each other. But one question remains, is Jack ready to say goodbye to all the beautiful girls for good and be a one-woman man by marrying his one and only love, Gina?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST Actor winner Ricky Davao and Maricel Soriano.

"FACE of the Night" Judy Ann Santos.

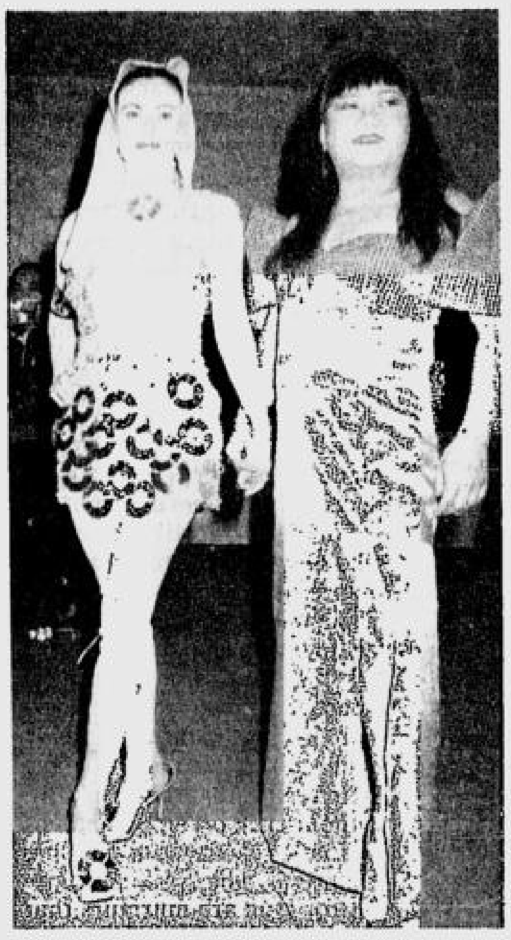
ECSTATIC Ina Raymundo bags best actress.

THE OTHER Billy, Carlo Muñoz.

A controversial victory for Osang as 'Star of the Night'

Young actress Judy Ann Santos would have clinched the coveted award, but was named 'Face of the Night' instead

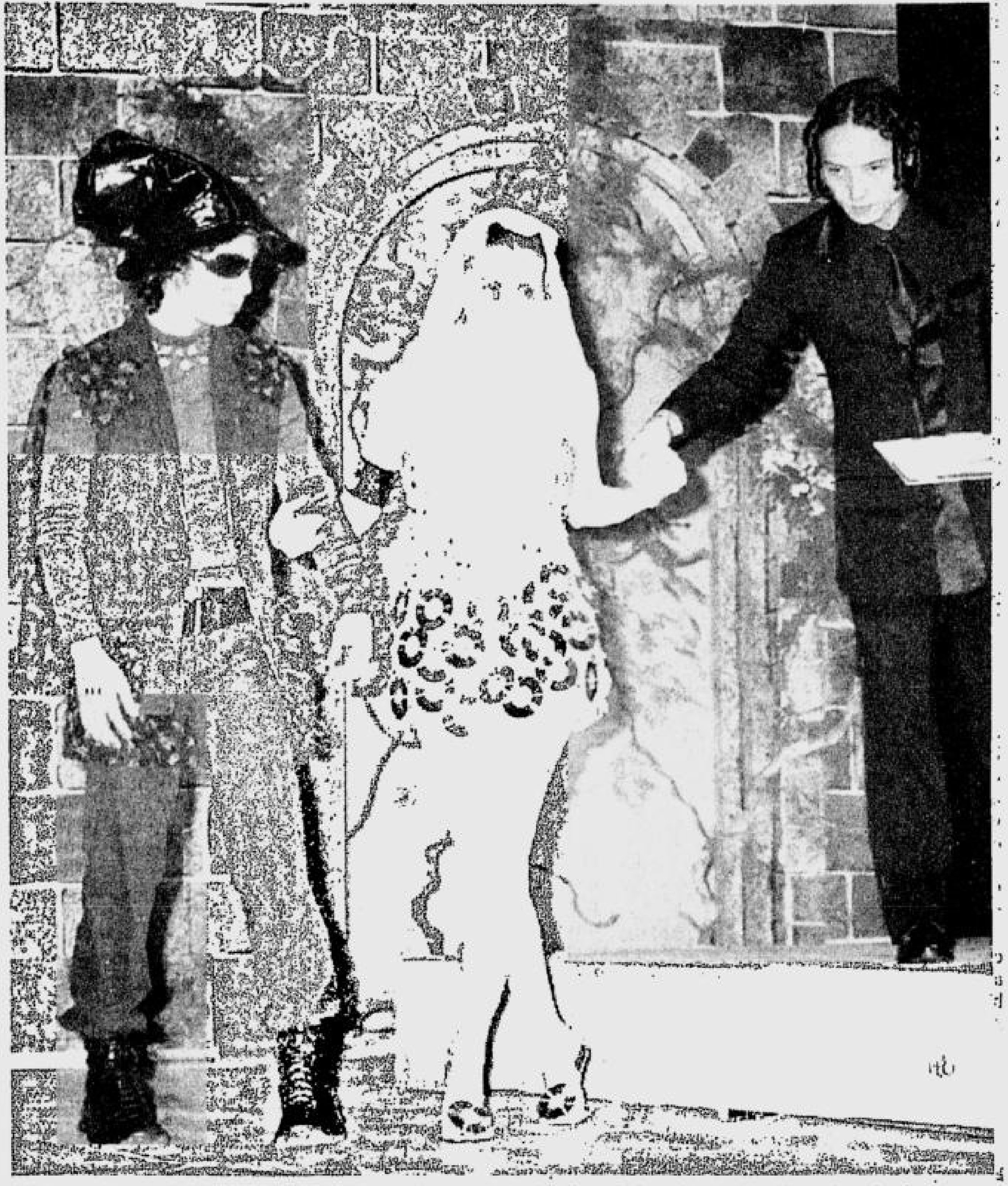
By Alex Y. Vergara



OSANG and cross-dressing escort Allan K.

YOUNG stars Angelika de la Cruz and Isabel Granada.

MELANIE Marquez and newest husband Adam Lawyer.



AWESOME THREESOME. Boy 2 Quizon, Rosanna Roces and Jeffrey Quizon look more like a bunch of musicians than movie stars in their outlandish outfits.

PHOTOS BY ROGER CARPIO

GRUESOME THREESOME. Bold stars Janna Victoria, Ara Mina and Patricia Javier in laughable outfits fit for comics.

ROSANNA Roces nearly lost the "Star of the Night" award to Judy Ann Santos, who later had to settle for "Face of the Night."

No, Judy Ann didn't lobby for Osang's prize, but one of the event's sponsors was reportedly unhappy over the bold star's victory in the Star Awards for Movies held last Saturday at the UP Theater in Diliman, Quezon City.

"If not for members of the Philippine Movie Press Club," said a Star Awards insider who requested not to be named, "Osang might have come home empty-handed. They stood by their decision to give her the award."

Maxifeel, a new brand of skin-care products and the award's sponsor, reportedly resented Osang's victory because she's identified with Forever Flawless, a facial care center she owns, and cosmetic surgeon Vicky Belo.

To appease the disgruntled sponsor, organizers reportedly came up with a "Face of the Night" award and Judy Ann became its unwitting recipient. She received a cash prize and a bag of skin-care products.

In fairness, Judy Ann deserves the hastily thought-of title. The young star was noticeably slimmer, but her face has remained, as Osang would put it, as flawless as ever.

Osang predictably caused a stir as she entered the UP Theater in her CD-studded mini skirt with a hood and plunging neckline by fashion designer Maxie Cinco. As if the racy outfit wasn't enough, she came with gay comedian and cross-dressing escort Allan K., who wore a beaded *terno* and wig.

The night also had its share of tender moments. Almost the entire Revilla clan, notably Tina, Maritess and Cita Revilla, came with their father, veteran actor Armando Goyena, who received an Ulirang Artista award from PMPC. Only son Johnny Revilla later accompanied his dad on stage. Too bad the family's matriarch, Paquita, was no longer around to witness the event.

Goyena, reading from a prepared speech, thanked, among others, producer Lily Monteverde, daughter Roselle and director Chito Roño. The three had been responsible for convincing the actor to return to the big screen and star in the drama-adventure "Yamashita: Tiger's Treasure," one of the entries in the Metro Manila Film Festival last December. People were starting to get fidgety in their seats, but they managed to patiently wait for Goyena to finish his long speech.

Such show biz ceremonies have become noticeably shorter lately, and the recent Star Awards was no exception. The Saturday night show ended before 11:30 p.m., although the delayed telecast went on until the early hours of Sunday.

Richard Gomez tried to entertain the audience, while cohost Sharon Cuneta hummed a Tagalog song from Regine Velasquez's latest album in between commercial breaks. They looked bored. Fans were notably more sober, their screams directed particularly at young stars featured in a number of production numbers.

The trio of Antoinette Taus, Angelika de la Cruz and Isabel Granada got the loudest screams. Former child star and soon-to-be Hollywood sensation Billy Crawford (yes, he dropped the Joe) caused quite a sensation as well.

Bold stars Ara Mina, Patricia Javier and Janna Victoria tried hard to look sexy but instead came out looking laughable in their atrocious red outfits. Janna, in particular, looked like a human spool with a mishmash of tulle wound around her waist.

Except for Richard, Sharon and Maricel Soriano—who, incidentally, is now being managed by Wyngard Tracy—no big stars bothered to grace the affair. While Osang made heads turn, former beauty queen Melanie Marquez lent some glamour to the affair. She wore a black bustier and came in the arms of American husband Adam Lawyer, her latest and hopefully last among a string of partners.

ULIRANG Artista awardee Armando Goyena with the Revilla clan.

FUTURE Hollywood sensation Billy Crawford.

JOLINA Magdangal does a diva act.

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SM CINEMA

SM Dial-A-Movie Tel. 633-9999
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SM CITY BACOOR
4173888

1	13 GHOSTS
2	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
3	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
5	SHALLOW HAL
6	GOT 2 BELIEVE
7	ESKANDALOSA
8	A BEAUTIFUL MIND

SM CENTERPOINT
7149922 -7161416

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2	13 GHOST
3	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4	SHALLOW HAL
5	WE WERE SOLDIERS
6	ESKANDALOSA
7	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
8	BEAUTIFUL MIND
9	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
10	GOT 2 BELIEVE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW
9350749

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	SHALLOW HAL
3	ALI
4	WE WERE SOLDIERS
5	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
6	GOT 2 BELIEVE
7	WE WERE SOLDIERS
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE
9	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
10	ESKANDALOSA
11	13 GHOSTS
12	NOT ANOTHER TEEN

SM CITY MANILA
5239240

1	ALI
2	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
3	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
4	WE WERE SOLDIERS
5	13 GHOSTS
6	WE WERE SOLDIERS
7	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE
9	GOT 2 BELIEVE
10	SHALLOW HAL
11	ESKANDALOSA
12	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

SM MEGAMALL
6331901 • 6329401

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
4	WE WERE SOLDIERS
5	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
6	GOT 2 BELIEVE
7	13 GHOSTS
8	ALI
9	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
10	GOT 2 BELIEVE
11	ESKANDALOSA
12	SHALLOW HAL

SM CITY NORTH EDSA
9295452

1	SHALLOW HAL
2	13 GHOSTS
3	ESKANDALOSA
4	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
7	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
8	WE WERE SOLDIERS
9	CLOSED
10	CLOSED
11	CLOSED
12	CLOSED

SM SOUTHMALL
8066888

1	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
2	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
3	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE
5	13 GHOSTS
6	SHALLOW HAL
7	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
8	WE WERE SOLDIERS
9	GOT 2 BELIEVE
10	ESKANDALOSA

SM CITY CEBU
2313876

1	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
2	SHALLOW HAL
3	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
4	MARSHALL DICK
5	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
6	HINOG SA PILIT
7	GOT 2 BELIEVE
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE

SM CITY ILOILO
3209422

1	RAT RACE
2	CLOSED
3	THE OTHERS
4	SHALLOW HAL
5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6	RIDING IN CARS . . .
7	CLOSED
8	MARSHALL DICK

SM CITY PAMPANGA
7126015

1	SHALLOW HAL
2	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE
5	HINOG SA PILIT
6	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT
8294075

1	A BEATIFUL MIND
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	WE WERE SOLDIERS
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE

SM CINEMA GUADALUPE
8820984

1	ESKANDALOSA
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	GOT 2 BELIEVE

SM CINEMA TUTUBAN
2514302

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	GOT 2 BELIEVE
4	ESKANDALOSA

SM CITY DAVAO
2976998

1	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
2	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
3	SHALLOW HAL
4	HINOG SA PILIT
5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6	RAT RACE

SM BICUTAN

1
2
3
4

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4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO

1
2
3
4

SOON TO OPEN!
4 NEW
STATE-OF-THE-ART
VISION & SOUND

THE PODIUM

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2 *2 NEW STATE-OF-THE-ART VISION & SOUND*

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1 BATAS NG LANSANGAN	1 NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE	4 SALSA	1 AMORES PERROS (Exclusive Screening)	1 THX WE WERE SOLDIERS
2 WE WERE SOLDIERS	2 ALI	5 SHALLOW HAL	2 WE WERE SOLDIERS	2 A BEAUTIFUL MIND
3 A BEAUTIFUL MIND	3 THX A BEAUTIFUL MIND GUARANTEED SEATS	6 WE WERE SOLDIERS	3 A BEAUTIFUL MIND	3 NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
4 GOT 2 BELIEVE		7 13 GHOSTS	Onstage 4 ILLUSIONE MARCH 7, 8, 9, 14, 15, 16	4 GOT 2 BELIEVE
				5 WE WERE SOLDIERS

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MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING
EMAIL: mmta@asia.com

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DTS)	SHALLOW HAL
2 (SDDS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
4 GOLD (DTS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
6 GOLD (SDDS)	13 GHOSTS
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
8	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
9	GOT 2 BELIEVE
10	GOT 2 BELIEVE

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3 (DTS)	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
4	ESKANDALOSA
5	RESERVE
6 (DTS)	RESERVE
Golden Pearl THX	RESERVE

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3274

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
3	ESKANDALOSA

starmall Movies
(Shaw Blvd.) tel 724.4986

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
5	ESKANDALOSA

METROPOLIS star
tel 850.4285

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	ESKANDALOSA
4	WE WERE SOLDIERS
5	NOT ANOTHER TEEN
6	13 GHOSTS
7	RESERVE
8	RESERVE

PREMIERE CINEMA THX
(Makati City) TEL. 751-2010 TO 13

1	A BEAUTIFUL MIND

Center Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1	IKAW LAMANG . . .
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC.
tel 930.9515

1	RESERVE
2	ESKANDALOSA
3	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	ESKANDALOSA
A	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	ESKANDALOSA
4	

GOTESCO CINEMA

Gotesco City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	
3	
4	ESKANDALOSA
5	13 GHOSTS
6	GOT 2 BELIEVE
7 (DTS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
8 (SDDS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
9 (DOLBY)	NOT ANOTHER TEEN

Gotesco Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	ESKANDALOSA

Gotesco Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
3	ESKANDALOSA
4 (SDDS)	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6 (DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
7 (DTS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
8	13 GHOSTS
9	ALI

Gotesco Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	ESKANDALOSA
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE
5 (SDDS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
6	WE WERE SOLDIERS
7 (DOLBY)	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
8	13 GHOSTS

Gotesco Ortigas
tel 656.6795

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3 (DTS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
4	ESKANDALOSA
5 (SDDS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Dilson
(Manila) tel 734.7724

Dilson	ESKANDALOSA
Lords	ESKANDALOSA
Jennet	

MARKETPLACE Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	ESKANDALOSA

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

3	RESERVE

Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
SUPER CINERAMA
tel 733.4238

1 (DOLBY)	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE
5	ESKANDALOSA

New Divisoria Mall
DIVISORIA CINEMA
tel 244.4619

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	RESERVE
6	RESERVE

FRC Cinema
Talaba Bacoor Cavite

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	BLACK HAWK DOWN

Berma
tel 879.2029

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	ESKANDALOSA

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	RESERVE
2	RESERVE

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna)
tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	GOT 2 BELIVE
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3 (DTS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
2 (DTS)	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3 (DOLBY)	BEAUTIFUL MIND
4	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2 (DOLBY)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
3 (DTS)	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
4	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	SOON TO OPEN
4	SOON TO OPEN

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729

1	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3 (DOLBY)	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES
4 (DTS)	COLLATERAL DAMAGE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	APOY SA MAGDAMAG
3	ESKANDALOSA
4 (DTS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3 (DTS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
4	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
5	MOTHMAN PROPHECIES

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	A BEAUTIFUL MIND

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249-2558

1	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	GOT 2 BELIEVE

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	13 GHOSTS
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	HALIK SA AKING LUPA

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	ALI
2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
3	

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808

1 (DTS)	GOT 2 BELIEVE
2 (DTS)	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
2	KATE & LEOPOLD
3	SHALLOW HAL
4	GOT 2 BELIEVE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	SHALLOW HAL
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3 (DTS)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
4	BATAS NG LANSANAGAN

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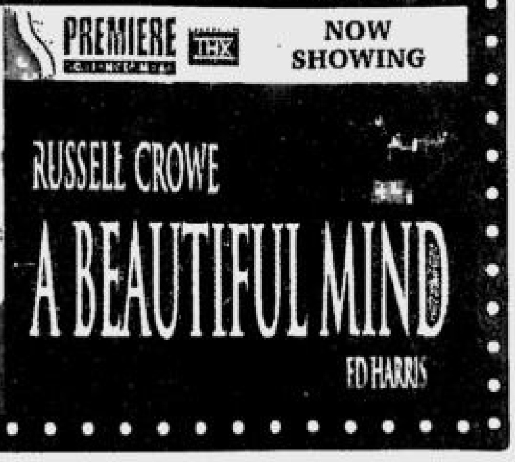
ADVANCED SCREENING THX DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

THX
CMG INTERNATIONAL



MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS

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Galleria
632-9115-16
633-7641 loc. 279

1 THX	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3	13 GHOSTS
4	WE WERE SOLDIERS
5	BEAUTIFUL MIND
6	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
7	SHALLOW HAL
8	GOT 2 BELIEVE
9	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
10	ALI

Ermita
536-7809-12

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
4	13 GHOSTS
5	BEAUTIFUL MIND
6	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
7	WE WERE SOLDIERS

Metro East - Marcos hway
682-8193 / 8280

1	ALI
2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3	BEAUTIFUL MIND
4	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
5	13 GHOSTS
6	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
7	GOT 2 BELIEVE
8	ESKANDALOSA

Novaliches
935-3229-30

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	WE WERE SOLDIERS
3	GOT 2 BELIEVE
4	13 GHOSTS
5	BEAUTIFUL MIND
6	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
7	ESKANDALOSA
8	ALI

Imus
471-8188 / 875-3838

1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
4	BEAUTIFUL MIND
5	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
6	ESKANDALOSA

Bacolod
441-0453 / 0459

1	KATE & LEOPOLD
2	GOT 2 BELIEVE
3	THE OTHERS
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	FROM HELL
6	IKAW LAMANG . . .

Iloilo
336-8077-78

1	THE OTHERS
2	SHALLOW HAL
3	MARSHALL DICK
4	RIDING IN CARS
5	GOT 2 BELIEVE
6	RAT RACE

Star Mills- Sn. Fernando, Pamp.
875-1927

1	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
2	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
3	SHALLOW HAL
4	SHALLOW HAL
5	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
6	BATAS NG LANSANGAN

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call-a-movie 536-7812

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Plagiarism . . .

From page A26

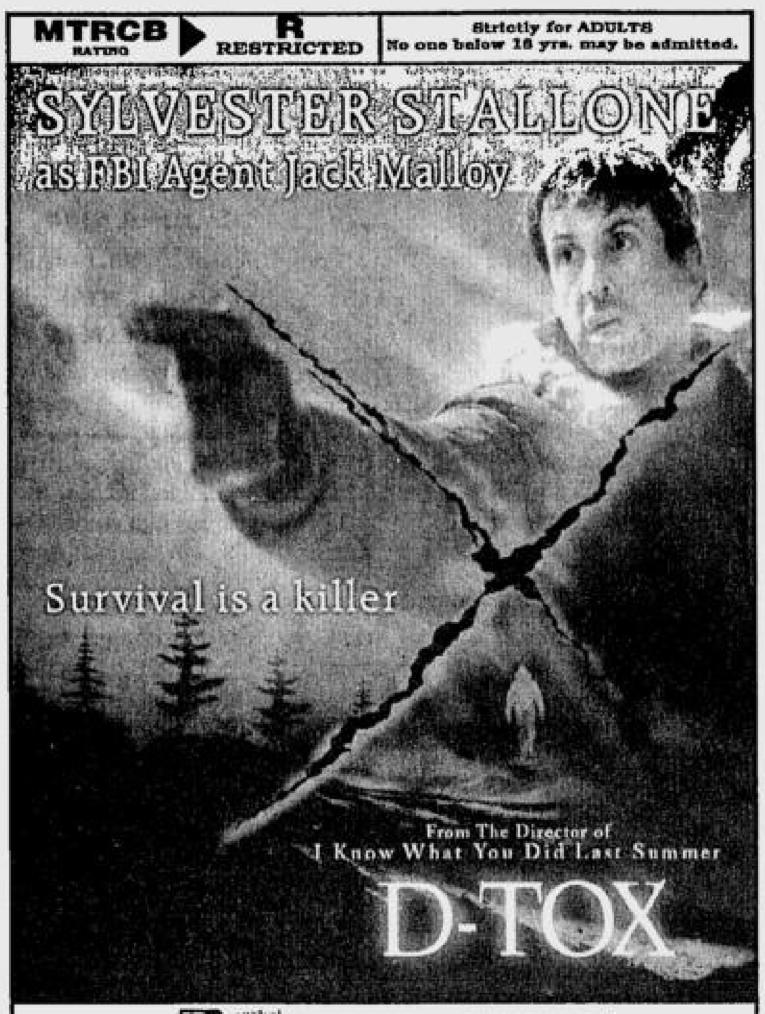
Feedback

FROM **Loi R. Landicho** of Rizal Village, Makati City: "Non-cable subscribers have yet to be introduced to 'C.S.I.' (Crime Scene Investigation, the highest-rating TV series in North America today. I would thus like to make an appeal to local TV networks (RPN 9 or ABC 5) to bring this great series to the Philippines.

"Forensic science has always been a fascinating field 'C.S.I.' triumphs by encouraging viewer participation in the resolution of crimes while learning some techniques in forensics.

"The series is therefore a must-see, especially for local law enforcers whose ineptness in solving crimes is patent."

MTRCB RATING ▶ R RESTRICTED | Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted.


SYLVESTER STALLONE
as FBI Agent Jack Malloy
Survival is a killer
From The Director of
I Know What You Did Last Summer
D-TOX

united international pictures
VISION VIEW VISTA INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

In Tracking a Killer
Everyone is a Suspect!

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VAMPIRES OF THE WORLD UNITE ON MARCH 13 !

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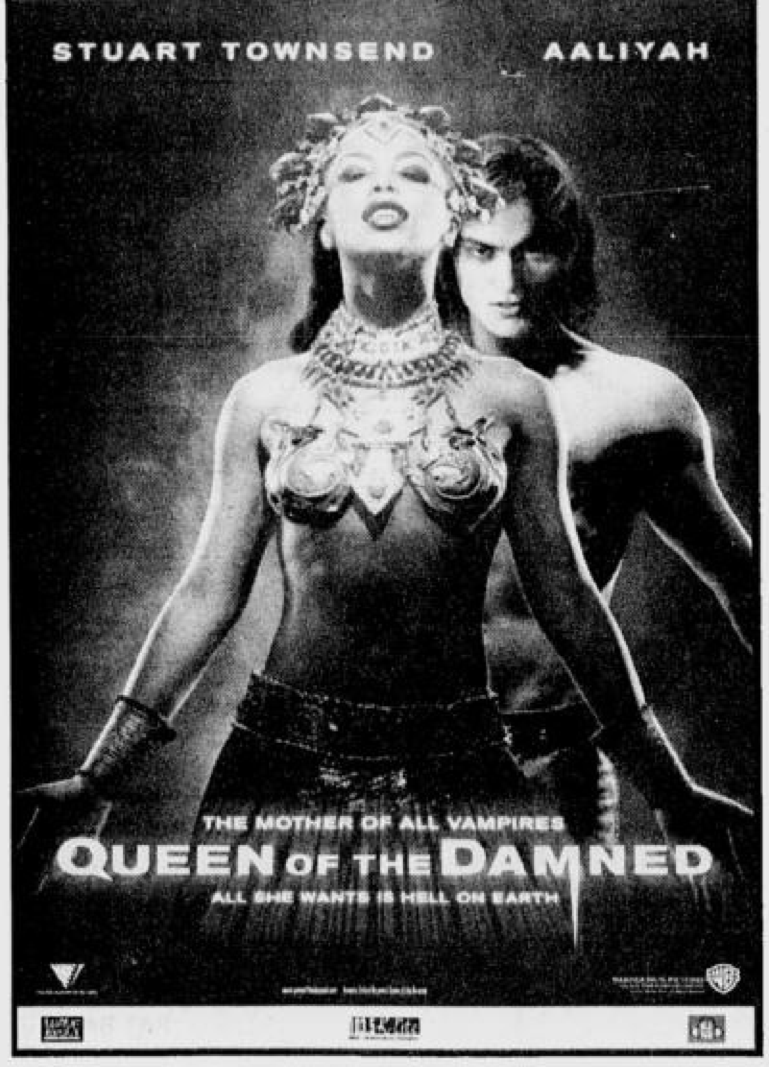
STUART TOWNSEND
AALIYAH
THE MOTHER OF ALL VAMPIRES
QUEEN OF THE DAMNED
ALL SHE WANTS IS HELL ON EARTH

THEATRE MALL
GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING

1 WE WERE SOLDIERS
11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
P 13

2 A BEAUTIFUL MIND
12:35, 3:20, 6:05, 8:50
P 13

Matinee: P80.00 - Screenings before 5:00pm, Monday thru Friday (Free Seating).
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MUSIC MUSEUM March 14 ILAW@ALIW WILIE NEPOMUCENO
7:30 PM / March 22, 2002 AYEN The Launching 9:00 PM
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS CALL :

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND EX

WE WERE SOLDIERS - P 13 12:20, 3:05, 5:50, 8:40	A BEAUTIFUL MIND - P 13 1:05, 3:50, 6:45, 9:35	WE WERE SOLDIERS - P 13 1:40, 4:25, 7:10, 10:00
GOT 2 BELIEVE - GP 12:45, 3:00, 5:15, 7:30	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE - R 18 12:45, 2:55, 5:05, 7:15, 9:30	A BEAUTIFUL MIND - P13 11:00, 1:50, 4:40, 7:30, 10:20

Matinee, P80, Mon.-Fri.,11:00 am to 4:45 pm Screenings, Free Seating.

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	GOT 2 BELIEVE IN MAGIC
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	EBE LASON KAY ADAN
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	QUEEN OF THE DAMMED
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	D - TOX
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	SHIPPING NEWS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7(DOLBY)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
FARMERS PLAZA-1(DOLBY)	BIBINGKA
FARMERS PLAZA-2(DOLBY)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
FIESTA CARNIVAL	
NEW FRONTIER	
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	HUBOG / TOO MUCH FLESH
ODEON	WE WERE SOLDIERS
ODEON-2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
ROBEN	ESKANDALOSA
TANDEM-1	SEX MEDUSA
TANDEM-2	SEX EDUCATION
TIMES	OTHER SIDE OF LOVE / AMERICAN PIE 2
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	ORIGINAL SIN
QUEZON-1	ESKANDALOSA
REMAR	ESKANDALOSA
REMAR-2	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	GOT 2 BELIEVE IN MAGIC
B	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
C	ISKANDALOSA
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-2	EIGA SAI FILM FESTIVAL
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
CINEMA-2	ESKANDALOSA
CINEMA-3	COLLATERAL DAMAGE
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	ALI
CINEMA-6	GOT 2 BELIEVE
CINEMA-7	HINOG SA PILIT
CINEMA-8	SHALLOW HAL
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-11(SDDS)	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
CINEMA-12	13 GHOSTS
CINEMA-14	GOT 2 BELIEVE
CINEMA-15	BATAS NG LANSANGAN
LORES	
CINEMA-2	CLOSED
CINEMA-3	CLOSED
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-2	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
CINEMA-3	WE WERE SOLDIERS
CINEMA-4	GOT 2 BELIEVE
CINEMA-5	NOT ANOTHER TEEN MOVIE
CINEMA-6	A BEAUTIFUL MIND
UNIWIDE METROMALL	
(LAS PINAS)	
CINEMA-1	
CINEMA-2	
CINEMA-4	
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARAÑAQUE)	
CINEMA-1	ALIPIN NG TUKSO
CINEMA-2	THE OTHER SIDE OF LOVE
CINEMA-4	ALAMID

AYALA CINEMAS

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A boldly conceived and intricately plotted drama of love, loss, retribution and redemption, *AMORES PERROS* has already been hailed by the NEW YORK TIMES as "the first classic of the new decade." Ever since its acclaimed and award-winning world premiere at Cannes, this directorial debut by Alejandro González Iñárritu has made a sensation on the international film festival circuit, where it has been praised as a film of outstanding power, originality, and raw beauty. It has also won a stunning array of prizes from both juries and audiences alike, proclaiming not only its impressive artistic achievements, but also its undeniable and visceral power to excite people in new and unexpected ways.

AMORES PERROS raises provocative questions about the human condition at the same time that the film daringly recapitulates and reinvents different styles of Latin cinema. The result is a vivid and intricate mosaic of classic themes rendered in original -- and unforgettable ways.

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 18 (R)

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MTRCB ▶ PG-13

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Louie C. Camino**

Plagiarism in the biz

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FROM time to time, we hear of instances of plagiarism in show business. These incidents occur often enough to make us believe that the problem is both chronic and serious, and that measures should be instituted by leaders of the entertainment industry to nip this growing trend in the bud.

Recent instances include a singer being accused of changing some lyrics of a song; the charge that the storyline a hit movie was filched from another writer; similar accusations regarding another hit movie shown last year; and senior writers cribbing aspects of new writers' stories and claiming them as their own.

What can industry leaders do to help the original writers who have been wronged? Each entertainment guild should set up or reactivate an appeals and adjudication committee to study changes of plagiarism before formal charges are filed, either within the industry or, failing settlement among colleagues, in the courts.

For their part, complaining writers should realize that a simple accusation of plagiarism, without substantiating documents or witnesses, will have a hard time prospering in either venue. Thus, they should accompany their complaint with supporting data, to convince arbitrators that they're serious about seeking redress and that their charge has basis.

A protection against future acts of plagiarism is for them to copyright their concept or storyline. Failing that, they can mail the material to themselves and not open the envelope after receiving it in the mail.

That way, if their work is plagiarized, they can open the envelope in the presence of authorities, and thus prove that they wrote it ahead of the plagiarist, by virtue of the date stamped on the unopened envelope.

In particular, new writers should be helped in fighting plagiarists of their work. Since they're new to the biz, they have no clout and more experienced plagiarists can run circles around them. A number of gifted scriptwriters have left show business after some traumatic experiences in this regard, and the industry is the poorer for it.

Aside from written material, productions themselves can be plagiarized in whole or in part. Some TV and film people see productions abroad or on videotape, copy them, and pass them off as their own.

Some of these acts of plagiarism are legitimized by claims that they are "adaptations," or have been "inspired" by the original foreign work, or are "tributes" or acts of "homage" to the originals, but industry insiders know better.

Plagiarism of productions is practiced by new filmmakers who haven't yet arrived at their own style or vision, and thus have to rely on emulation (a polite word for imitation) to see them through.

But some veteran TV-film people have also been caught with their hands in the cookie jar. In their case, the problem is burnout, hence the temptation to ape other people's work.

Also, some veterans have become so smug, lazy and cynical that they feel they can get away with artistic murder, rape or cloning, as the case may be.

TV treats

ON THE National Geographic Channel on Wednesday, March 13: At 8 p.m., "Bats of the Underworld." In New Zealand, the forests come alive at night with bats that forage on the ground.

At 9 p.m., "Out There (Adventure Starts Here). The father and son photography/conservation team of **John** and **Sune Nightingale** travels to Cornwall, Thailand, Spain and Costa Rica to investigate the alarming decline in world shark populations.

And at 10 p.m., "Ecstasy" focuses on the extraordinary fire ritual in Jerusalem's Church of the Holy Sepulcher. A torchbearer in the ceremony runs, transfigured with ecstasy, through Christendom's holiest site. To him and the thousands of Christians in attendance, he carries in his hands the miracle of the Holy Fire.

PLAGIARISM/ A25

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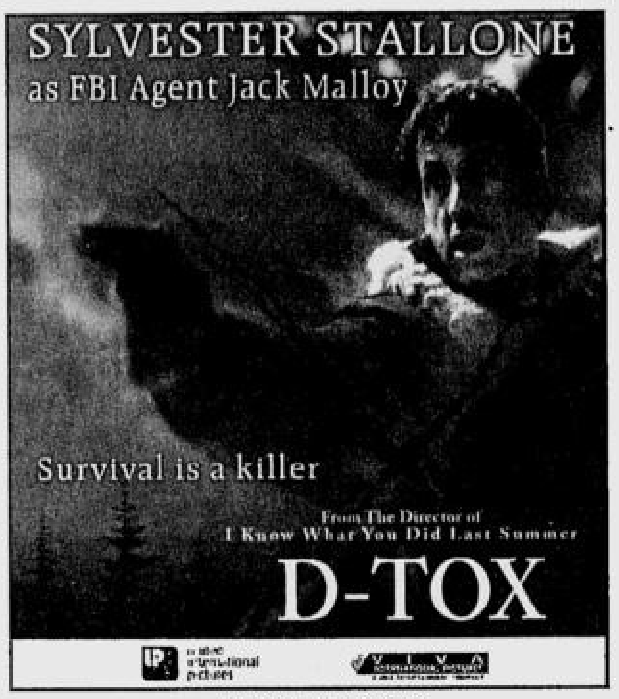
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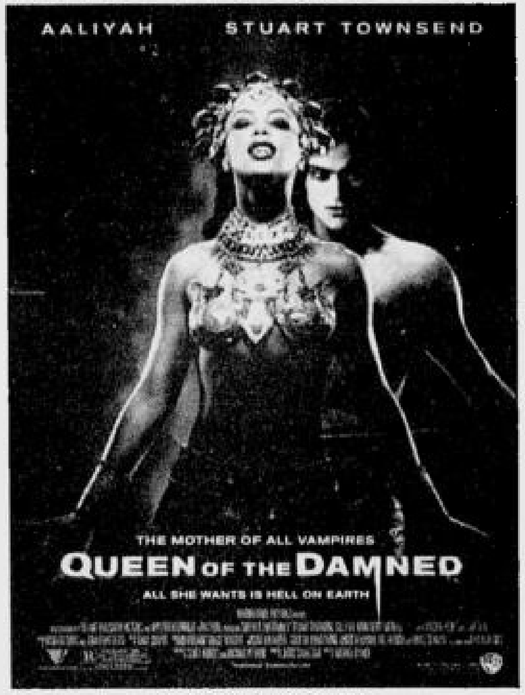
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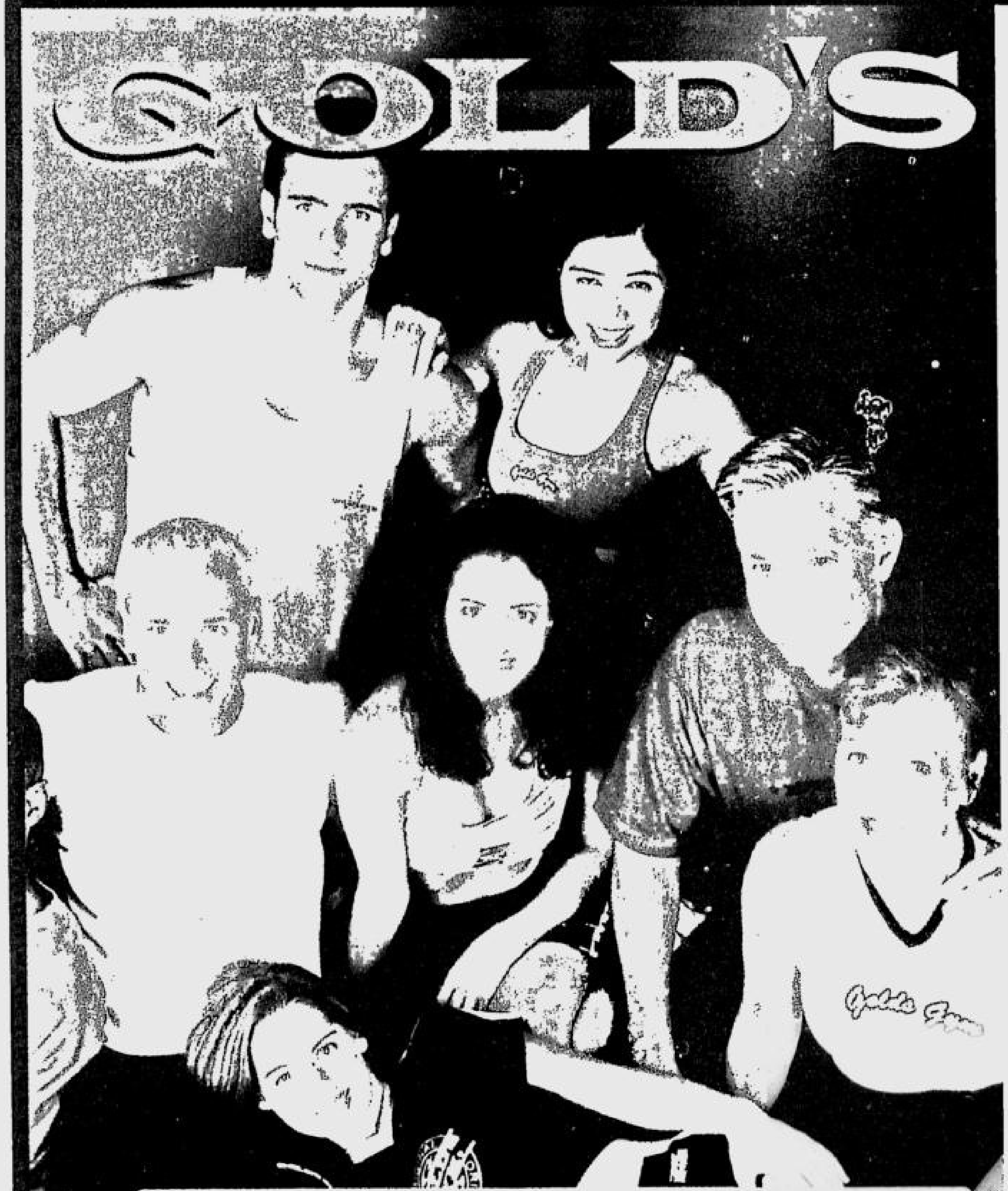

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Treasury bill rates hit all-time lows

By Clarissa S. Batino

BENCHMARK interest rates fell to all-time lows at yesterday's weekly auction, with the 91-day treasury bill rate hitting an average of 6.714 percent compared with 6.911 percent last week.

The Bureau of Treasury said the yield of the 182-day bills also fell to an all-time low of 7.086 percent from 7.288 percent last week.

Commercial banks use the 91-day treasuries as benchmark for setting their prime rates, or the interest rate they give to their most prestigious borrowers.

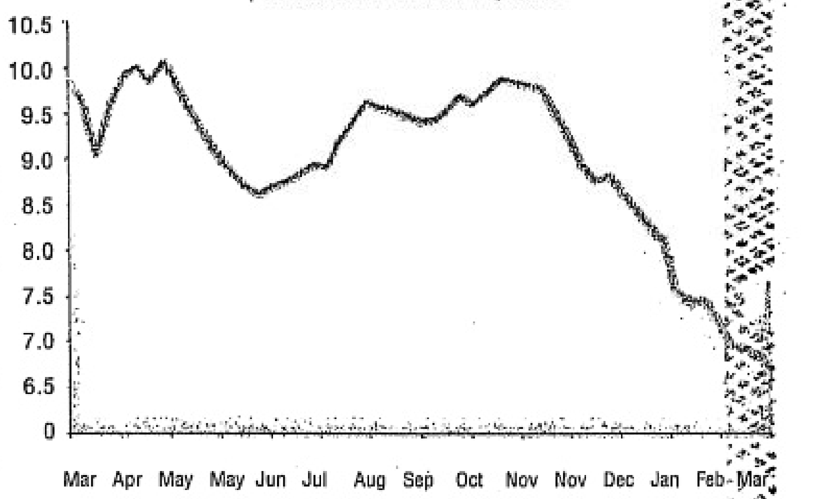
The central bank said last week that year-on-year growth in domestic liquidity, or M3, was at 5.3 percent in January. It said commercial banks continued to adopt a "cautious lending stance" amid "restrained credit demand from the corporate sector" as well as high levels of non-performing loans that rose to 18.3 percent of the total in January. For the meantime, banks are parking their funds in the safer haven of Treasuries.

The 91-day treasury bill rate kept its 10-week winning streak as banks continued to chase after the risk-free securities, given a lack of other investment outlets in

TREASURY/ B3

91-DAY TREASURY BILL RATES

(March 2001- March 11, 2002



INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

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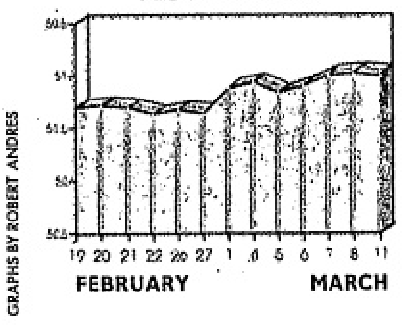


PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱50.990 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 11, 2002

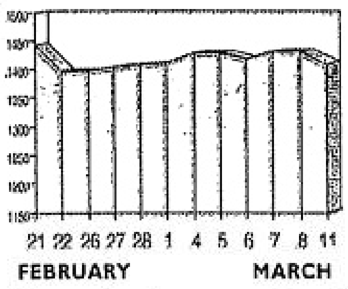
¥ 129.02 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 11, 2002

GOLD: $291/291.20
per ounce Hong Kong,
March 11, 2002

STOCK MARKET

Stocks close lower

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B5)

SHARES sunk deeper into consolidation yesterday as foreign fund managers secured their gains with no fresh news to convince them to keep their money in the market.

One of the key blue chips sold down was power distributor Manila Electric Co.'s "B" shares, losing 7.22 percent on worries it might not get a favorable ruling from the Supreme Court on an P11-billion refund to customers.

"We are still in consolidation," said Allan Araullo, vice president of Regina Capital Development Corp.

"We are at the lower portion of the trading range. We have been trading at 1,400 to 1,435 for the past two weeks. We could start to bounce back."

The main index fell 22.78 points or 1.59 percent to 1,409.41 points, slightly recovering from its day low of 1,403.80 points. *Reuters*

Gov't orders agencies, LGUs to use local textiles

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MALACAÑANG has ordered all government agencies—including state-run corporations, schools, military and police units—and local government units to procure only locally produced materials for their uniform requirements to lift the sagging textile industry and jumpstart the state-led Buy Filipino program.

In Memorandum Circular No. 20, Executive Secretary Alberto G. Romulo ordered all government agencies and LGUs to use local fabrics, knitted or woven from locally manufactured yarn, for the uniform of their employees and for other clothing and textile requirements of their respective agencies.

Romulo said government agencies and LGUs could only use imported fabrics if there were no local fabric of the desired quality or standards available in the market at competitive prices.

The mandatory purchase of local fabrics is in line with the government's Buy Filipino strategy aimed at shoring up domestic demand for locally made goods to offset losses in the export market.

The move is expected to boost demand for local textiles, which had been suffering from declining sales in the past few years due to a surge in imports of fabrics mostly through illegal channels. The stiff competition from imports has forced a number of fabric makers to close down operations.

The Federation of Philippine Textile Industries (FPTI) had earlier reported that the installed capacity of spinning mills have fallen from 1.5 million spindles in 1991 to 350,000 last year, which rendered 42,000 direct employees jobless. In the garment business, there are only 3,000 manufacturers in operation last year from 12,000 in the early 1990s.

The FPTI said the domestic market remained a potent market for local textile makers considering the hefty, local demand for fabrics of 300,000 tons annually, half of which is accounted for by imports. The FPTI said the industry needed government support not only in plugging the smuggling loopholes in the country but also in sparking demand for domestic products.

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Brokers OK deal on PSE relocation to Global City

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE 184 broker-stockholders of the Philippine Stock Exchange ratified on Saturday a revised agreement with the Fort Bonifacio Development Corp. to defer the relocation of the local bourse to a unified trading floor in the Fort Bonifacio Global City by at least seven more years.

Based on the term sheet approved during the first annual stockholders' meeting of the PSE Saturday, the PSE stockholders agreed to free FBDC from its commitment to complete the new PSE building by 2004.

Instead, FBDC will donate to the bourse the property earmarked for the unified trading floor within seven years from the signing of the agreement (2002), which can be extended by another two years. The future trading floor will have a total floor area of 12,000 square meters. A budget limit of P250 million was set.

The agreement provides that the conditional deed of donation will cover Lot 9-5 whose title will be transferred through shares in a new holding company that will own the property. The donation of shares will be done within seven years, and the shares in the new company will be held in escrow.

If FBDC failed to deliver the PSE premises at the end of the 9th year, it would be required to increase the floor area ratio (FAR) of lot 9-5 from 6 FAR to 12.

"At any time prior to the commencement of the development of the PSE premises, the PSE has the option to build the unified trading floor and relieve FBDC of such a commitment. In such an event, the FAR of Lot 9-5 shall be increased to 12 FAR from 6 FAR, and 100 percent of the new company shares shall be immedidtely donated to the PSE," the agreement provides.

As a condition to the donation, the PSE will use the new building as its main headquarters.

The relocation to Fort Bonifacio became controversial last year and had cost former PSE president Ramon Garcia his job. Garcia was sacked by the previous board of the PSE due to a heated word war with Metro Pacific Corp. chair Manuel Pangilinan about the issue. Garcia had insisted that FBDC must honor its commitment to complete the PSE property in the Global City by 2004.

Part of an agreement ratified by PSE members in 1999 was for FBDC to provide free construction design and detailed engineering plans as well as P250 million for the stock exchange structure.

FBDC is a joint venture between MPC and the Bases Conversion Development Authority.

COUNTRY SHARES
As of March 12, 2002

	BUYING	SELLING
ALABANG COUNTRY CLUB A/B*	1.65 M/1.7 M*	-
ALTA VISTA A/B*	-	350,000/450,000*
BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	725,000	750,000
CALATAGAN GOLF CLUB A/B*	75,000	95,000/105,000*
CAMP JOHN HAY	265,000	300,000
CANLUBANG	-	600,000
CAPITOL HILLS	120,000	-
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	160,000	190,000
EAGLE RIDGE A/B*/C**	620,000**	350,000/450,000*/700,000**
EVERCREST A/B*	135,000*	100,000
FONTANA D/C*/B**	-	90,000/150,000*/280,000**
FOREST HILLS A/B*/C**	200,000	230,000/300,000*/325,000**
MAKATI SPORTS A/B*	250,000	275,000/325,000*
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.55M	2,700,000
MANILA SOUTHWOODS A/B*	630,000/730,000*	670,000/750,000*
METROPOLITAN A/B*	-	120,000/125,000*
MIMOSA IND./C2*	120,000/200,000*	155,000/255,000*
MT. MALARAYAT A/C*	350,000/600,000*	400,000/625,000*
ORCHARD A/B*/C**	200,000	230,000/350,000*/425,000**
PUERTO AZUL A	115,000	150,000
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	280,000	220,000
RIVIERA A/B*	-	195,000/400,000*
ROCKWELL CLUB	-	550,000
ROYALE TAGAYTAY A/B*/C**	-	110,000/150,000*/180,000**
SHERWOOD HILLS A/B*/C**	-	150,000/250,000*/350,000**
STA. ELENA GOLF CLUB A/B*	1.8M/1.9M*	-
SUBIC BAY IND/CORP.*	290,000*	200,000/350,000*
TAT FILIPINAS GOLF A/B*	-	350,000/550,000*
TAGAYTAY H-LANDS CC/GOLF*	400,000/900,000*	965,000*
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	750,000	-
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VALLEY GOLF	225,000	-

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Capitol Hills Golf & CC	130,000	115,000
Calatagan Golf	90,000	-
Canyon Woods	200,000	190,000
Canlubang	-	-
Celebrity Sports	230,000	170,000
City Sports Club	-	Pls. Call
Eagleridge "A"	350,000	-
Eastridge	200,000	-
Evercrest	100,000	90,000
Fairways & Blue Waters	650,000	-
Fontana D/C	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Forest Hills "A"	230,000	200,000
Forest Hills "C"	300,000	-
Luisita Golf	-	300,000
Manila Polo	-	2,600,000
Makati Sports Club	300,000	250,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	680,000	600,000
Mimosa Golf Ind./C3*	170,000/350,000*	120,000
Mt. Malarayat	350,000	-
Orchard	230,000	200,000
Orchard "B"	-	250,000
Phil. Columbian	80,000	60,000
Punta Fuego	600,000	500,000
Puerto Azul	170,000	-
Quezon City Sports Club	240,000	200,000
Riviera Golf "A"	200,000	190,000
Riviera Golf "B"	250,000	-
Rockwell	400,000	300,000
Royale Tagaytay A/C	90,000/140,000	Pls. Call
Sherwoods	120,000	-
Subic Bay Yacht Club/Corp*	400,000	Pls. Call
Subic Golf	180,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	-	370,000
Tagaytay Highlands Golf & CC	850,000	700,000
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BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IN only one year, if Bulacan Rep. Willie Villarama has it right, the Philippine Ports Authority stands to lose about P100 million.

Willie is referring to the PPA's rental income from the Marine Slipway. This is an area of more than 7 hectares at the Manila port.

Stowed in the Marine Slipway are containers. They are put there before they are transported. Manila, as you know, is the port of entry for almost everything.

You can imagine the kind of business such an area of 7 hectares can generate. Willie says the government is leasing it for a song.

Based on his computation, the PPA should earn, in lease rental alone, close to P110 million a year. The PPA is getting only about P10 milllion. Too generous, huh?

In January last year, according to Willie's documents, the PPA leased the area to the shipping line called William Aboitiz and Gothong (WG&A). Big time, in short!

Whadayano—that was just about the time, in January 2001, when we were already about to say goodbye to the man named Band . . . Wrist Band.

* * *

THAT P100 million, to me, is big money. People kill for much less than P100 million. People die for a mere cell phone, goddamit!

If you don't to give your cell phone to a holdupper, well, because your poor father, who is just a laborer, worked hard to give it to you on your birthday, they will kill you.

Anyway, Willie based his computation—that P110 million in yearly rental—on an old memorandum issued by the PPA. It was made even before the time of Wrist Band.

In June 1998, which was just right before the Wrist Band administration would assume office, the PPA set the increase of all rental in PPA properties.

It was not a big deal. It only covered the next five years. I've heard of midnight appointments, but this one looked like a last-minute attempt at sabotage.

And so, the outgoing bosses at the PPA at that time even wrote down a schedule of the increases in all the ports in the entire country—as if in vivid, living colors.

For the Marine Slipway, the rent was supposed to be P150 per square meter by 2002. What do you know? That's already this year. Rent should be P110 million a year.

* * *

BUT, and this time, according to the current PPA general manager, Alfonso Cusi, the PPA did not apply the schedule. The Wrist Band administration deemed it too unrealistic.

The PPA used to lease out the Marine Slipway to a firm called the Veterans Shipyard Corp. Based on its named, obviously, it was run by military men.

That was the time of Kuya Eddie. The military-sounding firm was renting it at only P1 per square meter a month. The schedule said it should go up to P50 right away.

Under former PPA general manager Juan Peña, the big-time shipping firm WG&A rented it for P12, which in itself was already a big jump from the previous rate.

In a letter to WG&A president and CEO Endika Aboitiz, Peña said the so-called Economic Coordinating Council approved the lease to the shipping firm.

Missing in the letter was the rate. How much did WG&A had to pay for using the land? It was stated in another letter. And this time, only Wrist Band approved the rate.

* * *

STILL, as I said, WG&A's rental of P12 was a far cry from the old rate of P1 enjoyed by Veterans Shipyard. Enter this cute administration of Gloriaetta!

Under Al Cusi last year, the PPA imposed a higher rent on WG&A. Oh, it was only double its old rate. Cusi set the rent at P24.

He explained to me that he wanted a bigger increase, but the PPA actually could not impose an increase of more than 100 percent.

Apparently to pay back the PPA, the giant WG&A went to court. Well, the case was not over the rental. It was about the PPA's position that WG&A should vacate the area.

Cusi said that, based on the letter of the PPA's ex-general manager Peña, the lease to the shipping company expired last June. It was then up to the PPA to renew it or not.

Here, for you, all sports fans out there, I must quote that particular entry in the letter. And it goes like this: "The lease of the area should take effect on Jan. 1 to June 30 or until such time the PPA turns over its operation to the winning bidder for the North Harbor modernization."

* * *

IN its court case, the shipping company claims that it will give up the lease only as soon as the PPA needs the area for the long-delayed, much-awaited port modernization program.

Cusi claims it's quite clear in the letter that the lease expired in June last year. That's why PPA decided to fight it out against WG&A in court.

It is interesting, nevertheless, that Congressman Villarama also touched on the modernization plan in his speech.

The plan, it turns out, is an important reference point in that court case. Willie says up to now, the terms of reference for the plan have still to be finalized.

Cusi tells me that the investment committee is still trying to hammer out the TOR. Besides, the PPA itself needs more time to finalize the plan.

In the first place, it was put on hold during the time of Wrist Band. The PPA, therefore, had to come up with an alternative plan which is acceptable to everybody.

Meanwhile, by going to court, WG&A can enjoy use of that 7.3-hectare area at the port at a fixed rate. Who knows how long the court case will last?

It only becomes moot and academic the moment the modernization plan is put into motion. Cusi, nevertheless, believes we have to do it immediately. How come I agree?

Property firm seeks $62.5M in loans

INVESTMENT and property holding firm Kuok Philippine Properties Inc. (KPPI) is seeking $62.5 million worth of fresh loans from key convertible bondholder Rhinestone Ltd. to refinance outstanding debts.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, KPPI corporate secretary Federico Noel said the company's board approved on March 8 a resolution to secure the loan from Rhinestone, a major foreign investor in the Kuok regional property conglomerate.

KPPI, a unit of Hong Kong-based property developer Kerry Properties, is engaged in real estate development and management, securities brokerage and other financial services. It owns a portfolio of commercial and residential buildings including office buildings, shopping malls, industrial estates, hotels and townhouses.

The proceeds from the loans sought from Rhinestone will be used to refinance outstanding convertible bonds and bank loans, Noel said.

The KPPI executive said the board agreed to secure the loan sought from Rhinestone with "all or any" of the company's assets, subject to compliance with pertinent Philippine laws.

Foreigners are barred by the Philippine Constitution from owning land in the country.

Noel also said the board authorized KPPI to convert into equity in the form of preferred shares its deposit and advances to property development unit KPPI Land Corp., which has over 1,000 hectares of land in Cavite.

KPPI announced in November last year that it wanted to divest its 60-percent stake in KPPI Land, a joint venture with Malaysian property developer Pelangi Berhad, to generate funds for its debt reduction efforts. However, it has not been able to close any deal since then.

Among KPPI's property projects are the Shangri-La Hotels in the country, the Enterprise Center in Ayala and the Caylabne Bay Resort in Ternate, Cavite. KPPI is also affiliated with the Edsa Properties Philippines Inc.

KPPI is in dire need of fresh funds for debt reduction following the slump in the property sector. It had tried to auction off some assets, including a beach front property beside its Mactan Shangri-La hotel in Cebu as well as its stakes in wholly owned subsidiary KPPI Management and Services Corp., Taishan Insurance Brokers Phils. Inc. and KRM Reinsurance Brokers Philippines Inc.

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BCDA forms new body to settle John Hay dispute

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

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The committee would be headed by newly installed BCDA Chair Florencio Padernal, 'a move which Sobrepeña said indicated the desire by the new BCDA management to settle the issues affecting the 25-year lease contract on Camp John Hay.

The other members of the committee are Eileen Sosa, Flor Gracia, Joseph Rulla, Eduardo Ma. Santos, Hernando de Leon, Carlos Velez, Jose Osias, Izef Nisce, and Ma. Cristina Corona.

Sobrepeña reiterated that CJHDC stood on solid ground on the lease-contract dispute, citing the memorandum of agreement it signed with the previous management of the BCDA on the restructuring of its back rentals.

He said it was crucial to have resolution of the dispute soon to allow CJHDC to proceed with the development work on the project as well as start the revenue stream to the government.

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Stanchart sees RP rating upgrade

By Clarissa S. Batino

STANDARD Chartered Bank, one of the more aggressive foreign banks in the country, is supporting a growing anticipation of the money market for the reversal of the negative rating outlook for the Philippines to stable.

In a study of its global research team in Singapore, Stanchart said in a recent report that an upgrade to a positive outlook for the Philippines from the global rating institutions could not be ruled out.

Of the top rating firms, only the New York-based Standard & Poor's has not revised its outlook from negative but a review of the Philippine economy early this month was highly anticipated to lead to an upgrade in the outlook.

Moody's Investors Service had revised its negative outlook to stable in early February while Europe-based Fitch had adjusted its outlook to stable a year ago. Japan Credit Rating Agency had even upgraded the sovereign rating itself to investment grade.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura were optimistic that a revised outlook from Standard & Poor's would support an eventual plan of the government to seek a rating upgrade.

Standard & Poor's is expected to come up with a decision on the Philippine rating outlook in the next four to six weeks.

The country's sovereign rating from the top three firms is currently a notch below investment grade.

The positive outlook from Stanchart is based on the reforms the Macapagal administration had so far delivered plus others in the pipelines as well as on the government's commitment to sustain fiscal discipline.

"The country's improved economic outlook, largely based on the increased optimism with regard to the US economic outlook, will be positive for the country's balance of payments," Stanchart said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is projecting a balanced external payments position this year from a deficit of more than $1 billion last year as a result of a 16-percent contraction in export earnings and sluggish foreign investment inflow.

Stanchart, in its report, noted that the BSP forecast appeared to be very modest in the face of the $540-million investment of Japanese brewer Kirin to San Miguel Corp.

With an improved direct and portfolio investment this year alongside the peso's resilience to the weakness of the Japanese yen should help support a stable if not stronger local currency, the foreign bank said.

Stanchart is the first foreign bank to set up in the country.

The bank's local unit had registered a net income of P56.2 million in 2001, reversing a four-year losing streak that started during the Asian crisis. In 2000, the bank posted a net loss of P376 million.

Treasury . . .

From page B1

the money market.

It shed 18.7 basis points to beat the February 1987 low of 6.88 percent.

The auction results yesterday were the lowest since the bidding of short-term, government securities started on a weekly basis on Oct. 24, 1986. Prior to this, the auction was done mostly on a monthly basis and records were erratic.

"This is an unprecedented feat and would help the government in its cause to keep on reducing its cost of borrowing, which should also help push the economy," National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said.

Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said that going by the significant decline in rates yesterday, the fixed-income market could still afford to bring down the treasury bill yields.

"We have hit an all-time low and we believe the rates would continue to register a new record low in the coming weeks," said the deputy treasurer who believed the yield would go down by another five to 10 basis points in the coming auction.

Mendiola noted that this was the best time to issue long-term instruments to lengthen the profile of government borrowings and take advantage of declining interest rates.

In line with this, the Bureau of Treasury would issue today P4-billion worth of 23-year peso bonds. Currently, the secondary market for the 20-year bonds trade at 15.5 percent.

The deputy treasurer said the government should fetch a much lower rate considering that the last time it had issued 20-year bonds on April 20, 1997, the rate was at 14.375 percent.

Mendiola pointed out that interest rates in 1997 were much higher.

A trader from a foreign bank believed today's auction of P4 billion worth of 20-year bonds would dictate the tempo of domestic interest rates in the days to come.

Edeza explained that the issuance of long-term bonds was meant to take advantage of lower interest rates and to lock-in state borrowings at these low yields.

With the dearth in the market for short-term instruments, a trader from a local bank noted that weekly auctions had become a sold-out affair. The Treasury had suspended the auction of one-year debt instruments starting February and would resume selling the treasury papers in April.

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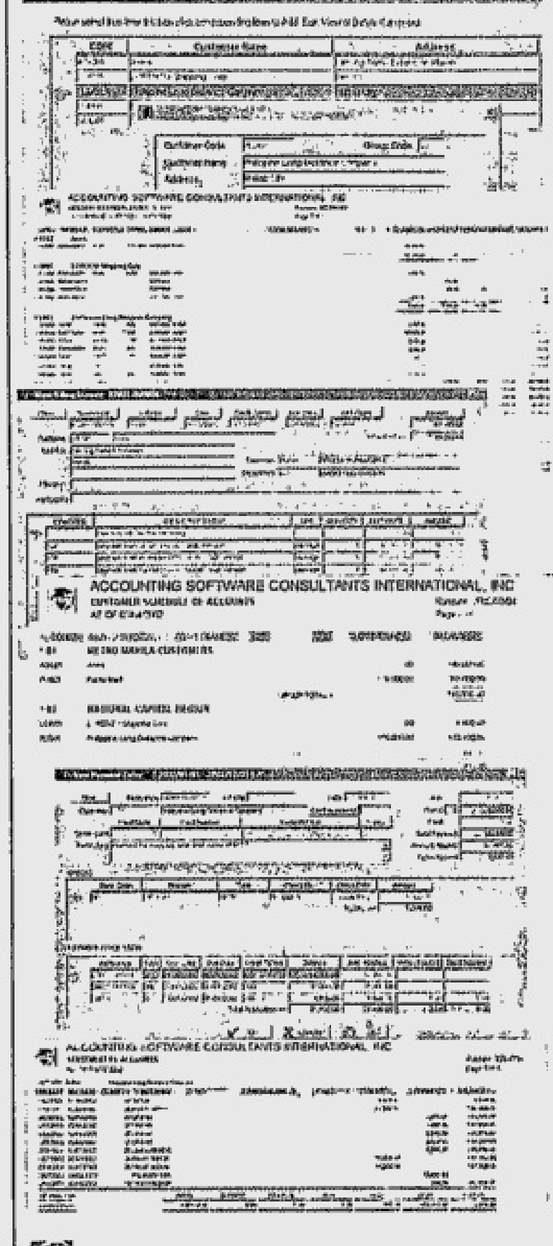

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- Age Analysis - Detailed
- Movement Analysis of Accts - Summary
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MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SATURDAY (8 AM - 3 PM)

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Stanchart sees RP rating upgrade

By Clarissa S. Batino

STANDARD Chartered Bank, one of the more aggressive foreign banks in the country, is supporting a growing anticipation of the money market for the reversal of the negative rating outlook for the Philippines to stable.

In a study of its global research team in Singapore, Stanchart said in a recent report that an upgrade to a positive outlook for the Philippines from the global rating institutions could not be ruled out.

Of the top rating firms, only the New York-based Standard & Poor's has not revised its outlook from negative but a review of the Philippine economy early this month was highly anticipated to lead to an upgrade in the outlook.

Moody's Investors Service had revised its negative outlook to stable in early February while Europe-based Fitch had adjusted its outlook to stable a year ago. Japan Credit Rating Agency had even upgraded the sovereign rating itself to investment grade.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura were optimistic that a revised outlook from Standard & Poor's would support an eventual plan of the government to seek a rating upgrade.

Standard & Poor's is expected to come up with a decision on the Philippine rating outlook in the next four to six weeks.

The country's sovereign rating from the top three firms is currently a notch below investment grade.

The positive outlook from Stanchart is based on the reforms the Macapagal administration had so far delivered plus others in the pipelines as well as on the government's commitment to sustain fiscal discipline.

"The country's improved economic outlook, largely based on the increased optimism with regard to the US economic outlook, will be positive for the country's balance of payments," Stanchart said.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is projecting a balanced external payments position this year from a deficit of more than $1 billion last year as a result of a 16-percent contraction in export earnings and sluggish foreign investment inflow.

Stanchart, in its report, noted that the BSP forecast appeared to be very modest in the face of the $540-million investment of Japanese brewer Kirin to San Miguel Corp.

With an improved direct and portfolio investment this year alongside the peso's resilience to the weakness of the Japanese yen should help support a stable if not stronger local currency, the foreign bank said.

Stanchart is the first foreign bank to set up in the country.

The bank's local unit had registered a net income of P56.2 million in 2001, reversing a four-year losing streak that started during the Asian crisis. In 2000, the bank posted a net loss of P376 million.

Treasury . . .

From page B1

the money market.

It shed 18.7 basis points to beat the February 1987 low of 6.88 percent.

The auction results yesterday were the lowest since the bidding of short-term, government securities started on a weekly basis on Oct. 24, 1986. Prior to this, the auction was done mostly on a monthly basis and records were erratic.

"This is an unprecedented feat and would help the government in its cause to keep on reducing its cost of borrowing, which should also help push the economy," National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said.

Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola said that going by the significant decline in rates yesterday, the fixed-income market could still afford to bring down the treasury bill yields.

"We have hit an all-time low and we believe the rates would continue to register a new record low in the coming weeks," said the deputy treasurer who believed the yield would go down by another five to 10 basis points in the coming auction.

Mendiola noted that this was the best time to issue long-term instruments to lengthen the profile of government borrowings and take advantage of declining interest rates.

In line with this, the Bureau of Treasury would issue today P4-billion worth of 23-year peso bonds. Currently, the secondary market for the 20-year bonds trade at 15.5 percent.

The deputy treasurer said the government should fetch a much lower rate considering that the last time it had issued 20-year bonds on April 20, 1997, the rate was at 14.375 percent.

Mendiola pointed out that interest rates in 1997 were much higher.

A trader from a foreign bank believed today's auction of P4 billion worth of 20-year bonds would dictate the tempo of domestic interest rates in the days to come.

Edeza explained that the issuance of long-term bonds was meant to take advantage of lower interest rates and to lock-in state borrowings at these low yields.

With the dearth in the market for short-term instruments, a trader from a local bank noted that weekly auctions had become a sold-out affair. The Treasury had suspended the auction of one-year debt instruments starting February and would resume selling the treasury papers in April.

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4. CALATAGAN GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	100,000	80,000
5. CAMP JOHN HAY	300,000	250,000
6. CANLUBANG GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	600,000	
7. CAPITOL HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB	125,000	115,000
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9. COUNTRY CLUB AT TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	380,000	370,000
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11. EASTRIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	200,000	
12. EAGLERIDGE GOLF CLUB "A"	350,000	340,000
13. EVERCREST GOLF CLUB "A"	100,000	
14. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "A"	220,000	
15. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "B"	280,000	
16. FOREST HILLS GOLF & COUNTRY CLUB "C"	500,000	
17. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "A"	280,000	250,000
18. MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	400,000	
19. MANILA GOLF CLUB (IND.)	11,000,000	
20. MANILA POLO CLUB	2,800,000	2,600,000
21. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "A"	650,000	600,000
22. MANILA SOUTHWOODS GOLF CLUB "B"	750,000	700,000
23. METROPOLITAN CLUB "A"	140,000	
24. METROPOLITAN CLUB "B"	150,000	
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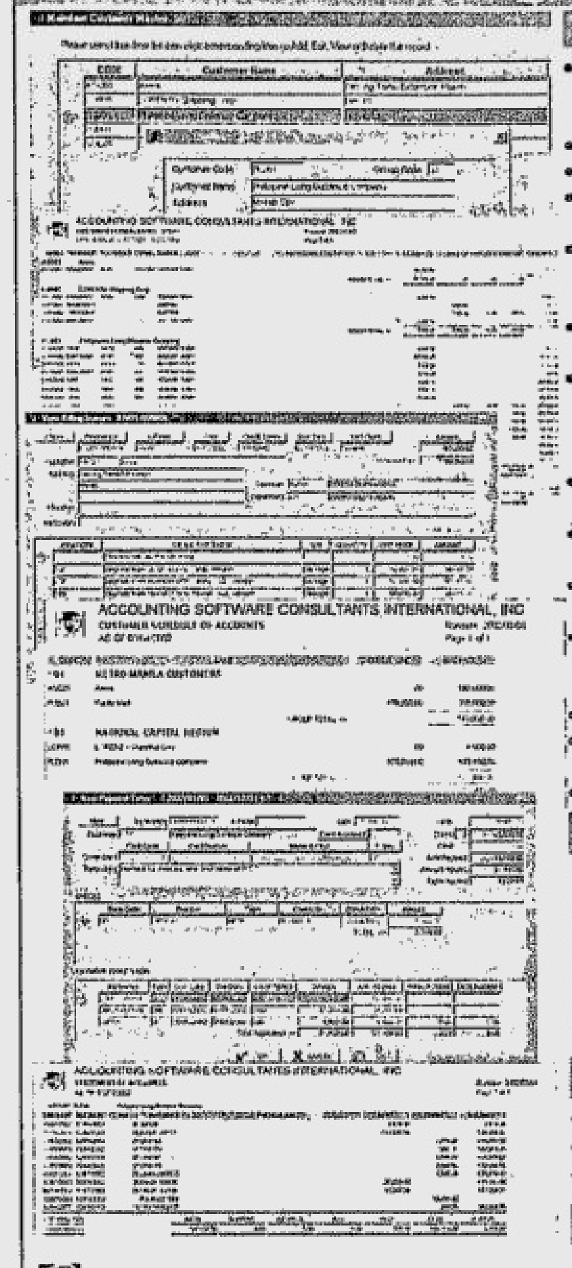

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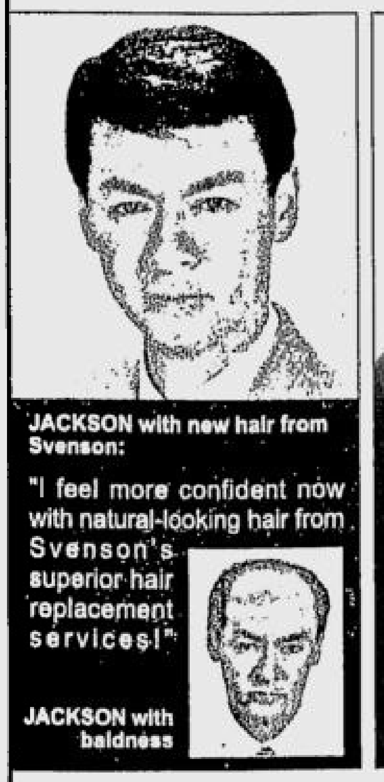
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Global banks go local in Asia to fund growth

TOKYO—Liberalization since Asia's financial crisis has enabled banks with global ambitions to accelerate their strategy of serving markets locally instead of funding business across borders, the Bank for International Settlements said.

The BIS said newly compiled data showed Asian banking markets to be more globalized than had previously been thought, but it raised the question whether the trend would continue once the wounds of the 1997 crisis had fully healed.

In its latest Quarterly Review, released for publication on Monday, the Basel-based BIS measured the trend by comparing a bank's locally funded foreign assets with its total foreign (cross-border plus local) assets.

In 1985, the ratio for Asia and the Pacific, excluding Japan, was 15.21 percent. It climbed gradually to 34.74 percent by 1997 but then took off and reached 75.56 percent by last year.

The BIS listed several reasons for the sea change, not least the impact of the third-world debt crisis of the early 1980s, when several governments imposed payment moratoriums on cross-border loans because of foreign-exchange crises.

Once bitten twice shy, banks shifted from the strategy pursued during the 1960s and 1970s of typically funding foreign assets with eurocurrency deposits: locally funded assets, though risky, are, in principle, not affected by payment moratoriums.

"Whether adopting a global consumer or wholesale model, banks are increasingly looking to serve customers through a local presence funded locally," the BIS said.

The phenomenon is not confined to Asia. In Latin America, the ratio of the BIS reporting banks' locally funded foreign assets to total foreign claims is 0.97. In North America, it is 0.76.

Yet, the sharp increase in Asia's ratio does not denote that foreign banks are sweeping all before them. Their locally funded lending accounts for less than 10 percent of domestic bank credit, compared with nearly 50 percent in Latin America.

But the BIS said the shift was notable as a reflection, in part, of the distress of many banking systems caused by the 1997 crisis.

The fragile state of local banks jolted governments into relaxing restrictions on foreign ownership and made it easier for multinational banks to grab market share.

Just last Friday, South Korea's Woori Finance Holding Co., a government-owned company that owns Hanvit Bank and four other financial institutions, said US investment bank Lehman Brothers had offered to invest up to $1 billion in what could be one of the largest foreign investments for the country.

"Banks with global ambitions have found it attractive to buy local banks put up for sale following crisis-related nationalizations owing to loan losses," the BIS said.

Seoul pledged to privatize its financial sector as one of the conditions of a $58-billion rescue arranged by the International Monetary Fund during the 1997 financial crisis.

Taiwan is committed to opening up its banking market, as is China following its entry into the World Trade Organization.

Nevertheless, the BIS sounded a note of caution as to the future of the local-funding trend.

Unlike Latin America, which runs a current deficit, Asia is generating substantial surpluses and so will have a natural inflow of liquidity to find investment. It might not need to keep bending over backward forever to accommodate foreign banks.

"Will East Asia continue to open its domestic markets to foreign banks even after local banks repair the damage sustained during the Asian crisis?" the BIS asked. *Reuters*

Thai trade deficit narrows in Jan.

BANGKOK—Thai exports fell 6.1 percent year-on-year in January, but a narrowing trade deficit showed the economy was on the road to recovery, a senior official said on Monday.

Thai Commerce Ministry spokesperson Rachane Potjanasoontorn said Thailand exported $4.87 billion worth of goods in January. Imports in the same month were worth $5.00 billion, a 9.9-percent decline.

"It is a good start for this year's exports, since we see a declining trade deficit. We hope that the trend will continue," Rachane told Reuters.

The ministry reported a trade deficit of $132 million in January 2002, compared with a deficit of $369 million a year earlier, he said.

The decline in January exports from the ministry was slightly lower than the 6.4-percent fall reported by the Bank of Thailand for January. The BOT put the deficit at $178 million.

The contraction was the eighth drop in a row, but smaller than a 13.7-percent contraction in December, the BOT said.

The central bank said the January data promised a speedier pickup in growth later this year as it included a steady rise in industrial output for export and more signs of improving private investment and consumer spending.

Inflation is projected at 1.5 percent in 2002, against 1.6 percent in 2001.

Thai officials said on Friday that they were watching the steady appreciation of the baht currency against the US dollar to make sure it was not harming exports. *Reuters*

NEWS BRIEFS

Lockheed strike

NEW YORK—Workers at two aircraft plants operated by Lockheed Martin Corp. voted to accept new contract offers on Sunday, but employees at a third plant rejected their offer, opting instead to strike from midnight.

Union officials said workers at two Lockheed plants in California ratified new deals, but employees at the firm's Marietta plant in Georgia voted by 78 percent to reject their offer and walk off the job.

Bethesda, Maryland-based Lockheed called the Marietta offer fair with the same major economic terms as that supported by the two California plants, and said the Georgia plant would still operate.

"The Marietta facility will remain open, and we will implement contingency plans to support our business commitments to customers," the company's aeronautics unit said in a statement. *Reuters*

Creative buys US firm

SINGAPORE—Computer peripherals-maker Creative Technoloy said Monday that it would pay $103.7 million in a cash-and-share deal to buy US-based 3Dlabs Inc.

Creative Technoloy, which is listed on the Nasdaq, said the acquisition of the graphics solutions provider would boost the company's strength in the high-end graphics market where it was renowned for its expertise. *AFP*

3G phone in April

TOKYO—Japan's second largest telecom operator KDDI Corp. said Monday that it would launch a third generation (3G) mobile phone service in April with seven million subscribers eyed by March 2003.

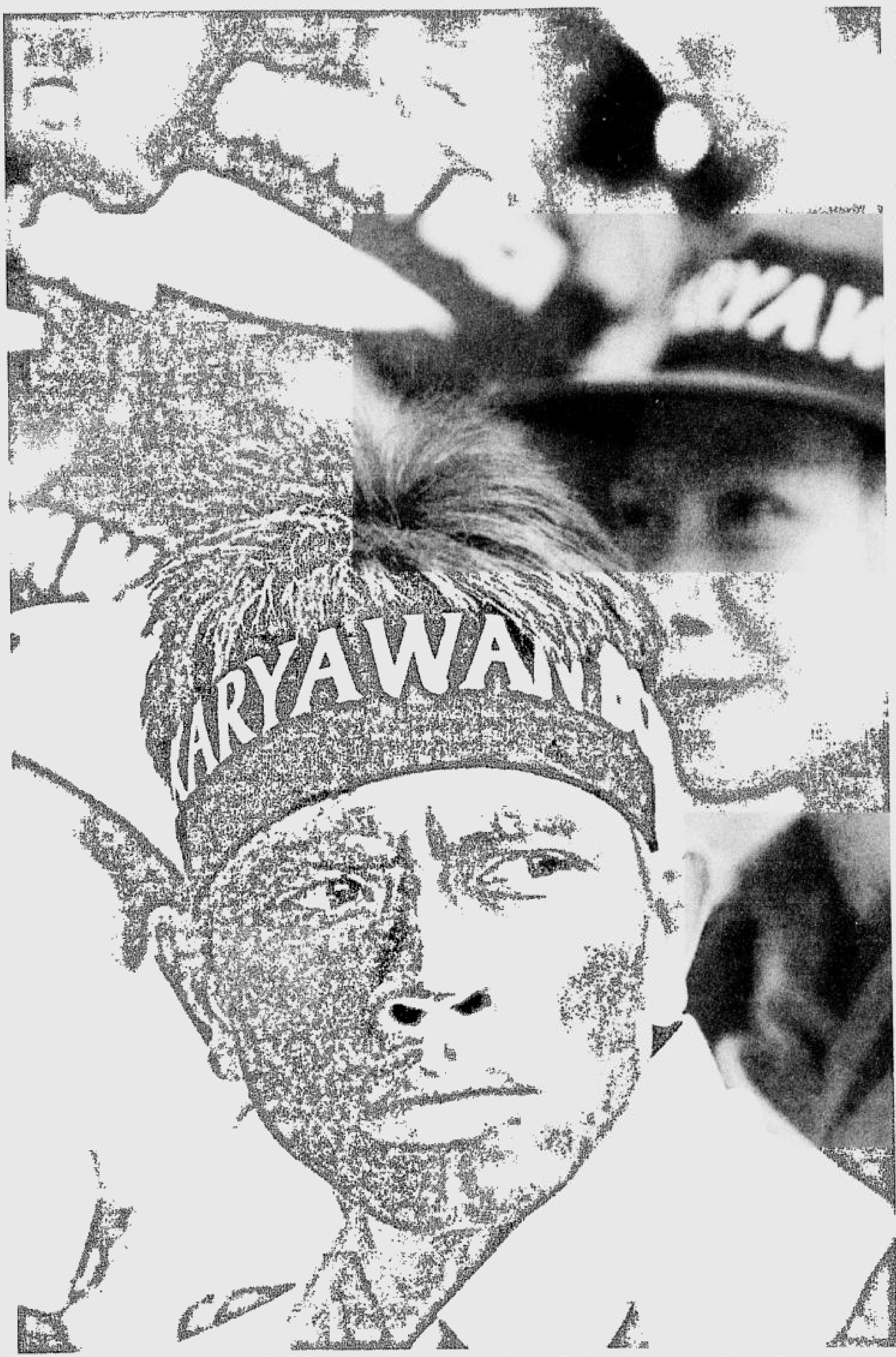
"We will start the services on April 1 nationwide," KDDI president Tadashi Onodera told a news conference.

"We will cover major cities in Japan, and by the end of this year we will cover almost 90 percent of the country," Onodera said. *AFP*

New port in Thailand

HONG KONG—Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing's Hutchison Port Holdings is planning to invest a second container terminal in Thailand's main container port, it was reported Monday.

Hutchison Port, the world's biggest container terminal operator responsible for about 15 percent of the global container trade through 169 berths in 30 ports, is planning to take over the vacant A-3 terminal at Laem Chabang, Thailand's main box port, Hong Kong iMail cited company sources as saying. *AFP*



AN EMPLOYEE of Bank Central Asia with a painted face pauses during a protest outside Indonesia's Bank Restructuring Agency office in Jakarta. Thousands of workers of Indonesia's largest publicly owned bank staged the protest, threatening to launch a five-day strike to oppose government's plan to sell its 51-percent stake in the bank to foreign bidders. AP

Fed chief drops hint without convulsing markets

WASHINGTON—Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan walked a fine line as he gave Congress his US economic outlook last week.

He dropped a hint that interest rates could go higher but did so without causing major tremors on Wall Street.

His more upbeat tone, a revision of testimony delivered just a week earlier, was thought to herald a shift in the Fed's public stance on economic risks, but his trademark caution kept financial markets from convulsing at the prospect.

On Thursday, the Fed chief told the Senate banking committee that the recession was over and that an economic expansion was "well under way."

Many analysts took this to suggest that at the March 19 Fed meeting, Greenspan and his colleagues would abandon their warning that economic weakness, not inflation, was the greatest concern. If they adopted a more balanced view, it would potentially foreshadow a rise later this year in overnight borrowing costs, now at a 40-year low of 1.75 percent.

"The fact that Greenspan took the time to change his formal testimony was pretty significant," said James Glassman, an economist at JP Morgan in New York. "It tells you that the thought process at the Fed is changing."

But Greenspan would likely handle the fledgling recovery with kid gloves, analysts suggested.

Mark Vitner, an economist at Wachovia Securities, said Greenspan's warning that the recovery would not match past resurgence from recession made clear he was going to proceed with extreme caution in the months ahead. *Reuters*

KLIA on track to becoming regional hub

KUALA LUMPUR—Kuala Lumpur's three-year-old international airport is on track to become a regional hub, with passenger traffic expected to reach 17 million this year, a senior official said.

The Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) would receive a boost when an additional 231 flights a week moved from the old Subang airport on July 4, Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd executive director Rosman Abdullah was quoted in the Star newspaper Monday.

He said five new carriers would start using KLIA in the coming months—Kuwait Airlines, Syrian Airlines, Air Macau, Australian Airlines and Philippine Airlines. The airport currently serves 43 carriers.

Six other airlines—Lauda Air, Gulf Air, Emirates Airlines, Saudi Arabian Airlines and Qatar Airways—would also increase frequencies to Malaysia this year, he said. *AFP*

Most Taiwanese firms planning to invest in China

TAIPEI—Most Taiwanese enterprises planning new overseas investments are focusing on China after Beijing's entry to the World Trade Organization, a government survey showed Monday.

The poll showed 74.7 percent of the 1,910 respondents currently had operations on the mainland, up from 69.1 percent in 1999.

Some 16.5 percent have investments in the United States, followed by 9.1 percent in Hong Kong and 6.7 percent in Malaysia, according to the survey conducted by the economic ministry from July to October.

And 467 businesses, or 24.3 percent of those polled, said they planned to continue making overseas investments. *AFP*

US economists jack up forecasts

WASHINGTON—US economists are rushing to ratchet their economic forecasts higher as favorable data keep flowing in, the closely watched Blue Chip Economic Indicators newsletter said on Sunday.

In the March poll, Blue Chip's panel of forecasters boosted its outlook for first-quarter gross domestic product to a gain of 2.6 percent, up a full percentage point from the 1.6-percent rise predicted in February.

"The pace of US economic growth appears to be rebounding at a remarkably rapid pace," the newsletter said in a summary of the survey results. "Recent data has left economists scrambling to raise their forecasts of GDP growth in the first half of the year." *Reuters*

Japanese technology giants scrambling to hire fresh Chinese talent

TOKYO—Japanese technology leaders are scrambling to hire fresh talent in China to cut costs and improve software development as a pool of suitably skilled domestic engineers dries up, companies said Monday.

NEC Corp., Hitachi Ltd. and Toshiba Corp. all said they would nearly double the number of Chinese engineers by March 2004, while rival Fujitsu Ltd. stated it, too, was steadily expanding its labor force in China.

"There is a shortage of engineers in Japan so we are targeting China and India," said an NEC spokesperson.

The high-tech firm said it was focusing more on software solutions after cutting back on hardware production. "So we must increase the number of engineers to meet the demand," said the spokesperson.

NEC will boost staff in China to 2,700 from 1,200 as part of a global scheme to lift its software and service engineers by 10,000 people to 60,000.

"Chinese engineers already have a good level of Japanese and so we are able to send documents and they are understood," said the spokesperson, adding cost was "of course a factor."

Hitachi estimates it saves some 30 percent on labor costs by hiring Chinese talent instead of Japanese and plans to raise the number of Chinese systems engineers to 300 staff from 160.

The new recruits will work on developing home appliances as well as software solutions.

"Home appliances research and development had up to now been conducted in Japan only, but it is now starting in China as well," said Hitachi spokesperson Hiroki Inoue, adding 10 new graduate engineers, mostly focusing on air-conditioner development, were in Japan now for training.

Toshiba said it aimed to lift the number of Chinese engineers to 580 people from 330 by March 2004.

"Chinese engineers are excellent and cost-wise they are cheaper to hire than in Japan," said company spokesperson Kenichi Sugiyama. "In Japan we have a shortage of engineers, so that's why we are developing our workforce in China."

The company employs around 8,000 Japanese system engineers.

Leading computer maker Fujitsu Ltd. said it was also excited about the Chinese market as it has become the global focus of software development. *AFP*

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Monday, March 11, 2002)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	4,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	70	70	69	69	403,100
Citystate Savings Bank	14.25	14.25	14.25	14.25	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	33	33.5	31.5	32	778,100
First E-Bank Corp.	3	3	2.65	2.65	493,000
Global Business Bank Inc.	70.5	81.5	70.5	81.5	3,200
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	45.5	45.5	43.5	44	154,700
Philippine National Bank	62	62	60.5	60.5	17,900
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	2,700
Security Bank Corp.	19.25	19.25	19	19.25	16,700
Union Bank of the Phil.	21.25	21.5	21	21	294,000
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Bankard Inc.	1.36	1.36	1.32	1.32	131,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1380	1390	1380	1390	4,140
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	0.82	0.82	0.82	0.82	10,000
Sun Life Financial Serv.	1045	1060	1025	1060	45,230
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	32.5	33	32.5	33	24,900
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.71	0.73	8,490,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	800	800	795	800	27,830
Ipeople Inc.	0.76	0.8	0.76	0.76	240,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.065	0.065	0.065	0.065	6,400,000
Liberty Telecoms Holdings	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	150,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3	3	3	41,000
Piltel	0.47	0.47	0.45	0.46	11,250,000
Phil. Telegraph & Tel. Co.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	20,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	515	520	505	520	188,920
Ivantage Corp.	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.54	290,000
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.021	10,100,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	32.5	32.5	32	32	901,700
Manila Electric Co. B	47	47	44.5	45	2,101,400
Petron Corp.	1.86	1.86	1.8	1.82	9,507,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.91	0.92	0.91	0.92	130,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	2,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	2.7	2.7	2.48	2.48	6,410,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	20,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	10,000
William, Gothong & Aboitiz	1.52	1.52	1.52	1.52	79,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.3	0.34	0.3	0.34	260,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	6	6	6	6	9,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.5	88,000
Union Cement Corp.	0.62	0.66	0.62	0.66	550,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.12	2.12	2.12	2.12	100,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	9,000
Jollibee Foods Corp.	13	13	13	13	12,700
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.25	123,000
RFM Corp.	1.6	1.62	1.54	1.56	1,973,000
Swift Food Inc.	2.55	2.55	2.2	2.2	191,000
San Miguel Corp. A	48	48.5	48	48	377,700
San Miguel Corp. B	65	65	64	64	169,200
Universal Robina Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.9	4.9	38,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	667,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	101,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	260,000
APC Group Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.12	0.125	700,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.007	0.007	0.007	0.007	4,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.36	0.36	0.35	0.35	100,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	3.65	3.65	3.45	3.45	490,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	130,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	120,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10.25	10	10.25	4,900
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.75	0.76	28,040,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.14	0.14	0.14	0.14	60,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	100,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,570,000
Ebecom Holdings Inc.	0.11	0.115	0.105	0.11	9,620,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	20,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.06	1.06	1.06	1.06	1,120,000
First Phil Hldgs. Corp.	32.5	32.5	32	32	1,014,200
Global Equities Inc.	0.16	0.16	0.155	0.155	120,000
Ionics Inc.	7.9	7.9	7.9	7.9	25,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.86	1.88	90,000
Macroasia Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	10,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	800,000
Medco Holdings	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.17	600,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.85	0.86	4,540,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	200,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	1,010,000
Music Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	110,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.91	50,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	850,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	10,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.15	0.15	0.15	0.15	520,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	1,260,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Corro-Coat Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	8,000
Federal Chemicals Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	20,000
Interphil Labs Inc. A	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.91	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	200,000
Pryce Corp.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1,600,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	14	14.25	14	14.25	180,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	2,960,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.6	0.6	0.59	0.59	530,000
Grand Plaza Hotel Corp.	14	14	11	11	11,300
Manila Jockey Club	11	11	11	11	100
Mondragon Intl Phils. Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.4	0.4	180,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	33	33.5	32.5	33.5	590,800
DMCI Holdings Inc.-Pref.	785	785	785	785	450
Equitable PCI Bank-War	1.7	1.7	1.64	1.64	26,000
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	0.0014	231,000,000
RFM Corp.-Pref.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	9,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Y	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,200
PLDT (10% Pref) Series Z	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT 10% Pref Series Aa	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,100
Philweb.Com Inc.-Warrants	0.0055	0.006	0.0055	0.0055	70,000,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	420	420	420	420	50
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	7	7	6.8	6.9	14,627,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.22	0.24	0.22	0.24	290,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	120,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	1,920,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.51	0.51	0.48	0.49	4,920,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.31	0.32	0.3	0.3	2,460,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.04	2.06	25,511,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	300,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.4	0.4	1,300,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.065	0.07	0.0625	0.07	700,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.66	1.7	1.66	1.7	40,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09	300,000
SM Development Corp.	1	1	1	1	3,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.6	3,240,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	4,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't.	2.5	2.5	2.42	2.42	36,000
Itogon-Suyoc Mines A	0.04	0.042	0.04	0.041	39,100,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.205	0.205	0.205	0.205	500,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	0.0036	9,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	0.0048	50,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	210,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.02	0.02	8,500,000
Interport Res. B	0.0046	0.0046	0.0044	0.0044	11,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	30,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	7,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	15,000,000
Vulcan Ind'l.	0.18	0.21	0.18	0.21	340,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	2,359,770	121,947,620.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	427,924,550	422,254,010.00
PRO	55,731,000	180,357,670.00
Mining	102,946,000	2,166,760.00
OIL	71,840,000	699,800.00
GRAND TOTALS:	660,806,320	727,437,360.00

	AVERAGES	
Banks & Fin Svc	572.35	DOWN 12.26
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,925.82	DOWN 23.32
PRO	611.83	DOWN 15.33
Mining	1,363.76	DOWN 26.81
OIL	1.78	DOWN 0.10
All Shares Index	761.72	DOWN 6.77
Composite	1,409.41	DOWN 22.78

NO. OF ADVANCES: 18; NO. OF DECLINES: 82; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 32; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 132; NO. OF TRADES: 3,626

PSE election squabble not over

By Doris C. Dumlao

AFTER the controversial election of new Philippine Stock Exchange chair Vivian Yuchengco, the camp of rival Robert Coyuito yesterday threatened to call for snap elections to revamp the eight non-broker representatives who now control majority of the 15-member PSE board.

Yuchengco, for her part, appealed for unity in the PSE, noting that brokers must accept the fact that they no longer controlled majority of the board due to a provision in the Securities Regulation Code favoring independent or private sector representatives. She said her immediate priority as PSE chair would be to patch things up with Coyiuto.

In a television interview, Cesar Cruz, legal counsel for the Coyiuto group, said there could be no harmony within the exchange if the non-brokers would not respect the mandate given by the brokers to the group.

"What was very wrong was the disregard by the non-brokers to the mandate given to the Coyiuto group. The election of Yuchengco is flawed on both moral and legal grounds," he said.

"We will appeal to the non-brokers to reconsider their votes or obtain a mandate from the stockholders through an election. That is the most logical and decent thing for them to do," he stressed.

As much as possible, Cruz said the group would not want the dispute to reach the courts. If the sitting non-brokers would not reconsider their appeal, he said the next step would be to push for special elections for non-brokers since the current ones were not installed through a free balloting.

He said that special elections could be called only by the PSE chair, the president or majority of the stockholders.

"Since they want to vote for the chair, they must submit themselves to elections," he said.

The PSE held its first annual elections under a demutualized regime last Saturday and Coyiuto's group, which dominated the brokers' poll with a ratio of 5:2 over Yuchengco's, failed to clinch the chairmanship of PSE during the succeeding board meeting. Even if Yuchengco's group got only two slots out of the seven seats allotted to brokers, she was elected chair with an 8-7 vote, mostly with the help of non-broker representatives.

CURRENCIES

March 11, 2002 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.143903	1.000000	50.9510
Japan	Yen	0.008903	0.007783	0.3966
United Kingdom	Pound	1.626058	1.421500	72.4268
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.146663	0.128213	6.5326
Switzerland	Franc	0.678472	0.593120	30.2201
Canada	Dollar	0.721160	0.630438	32.1214
Singapore	Dollar	0.627898	0.548908	27.9674
Australia	Dollar	0.598839	0.523505	26.6731
Bahrain	Dinar	3.034387	2.652661	135.1557
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.305041	0.266667	13.5870
Brunei	Dollar	0.627898	0.548908	27.9674
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000114	0.000100	0.0051
Thailand	Baht	0.026400	0.023079	1.1759
UAE	Dirham	0.311461	0.272279	13.8729
Korea	Won	0.000877	0.000767	0.0391
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.874200	44.5414

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DISCLOSURES

PHILIPPINE Long Distance Telephone Co. reiterated that it had yet to determine the percentage of equity interest in Smart that it would sell as well as the structure and terms of the sale and the valuation of the shares. The company also declined to give the identity of investors interested in Smart.

* * *

BANCO Filipino Savings and Mortgage Bank will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on April 8, 5 p.m. at the 9/F of BF Building, Makati City.

* * *

KUOK Philippine Properties Inc. plans to convert its deposit and advances in its subsidiary, **KPPI Land Corp.**, into equity in the form of redeemable preferred shares.

* * *

MANILA Electric Co. will hold an investors' briefing on March 19, 2 p.m. at the Burgundy Room, 13/F of Lopez Building, Meralco Center, Pasig City. ***Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research***

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*SXGA Real Projection (EF30), XGA Real Projection (XF30) *Dimensions : 439 (W) x 230 (H) x 606 (D) mm *Weight : 20.5 kg *Lenses sold separately *XF30 is 5,200 ANSI Lumens.
Portable Type
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3,500 / 2,600 ANSI Lumens
*XGA Real Projection *Dimensions : 319 (W) x 168 (H) x 429.5 (D) mm *Weight : 8.4 kg (XP45), 7.9 kg (XP40) *XP40 is 2,600 ANSI Lumens.
Ultra Portable Type
PLC-XU35, 30 / SU30
2,000 / 1,400 / 1,700 ANSI Lumens
*XGA Real Projection (XU35/35), SVGA Real Projection (SU30) *Dimensions : 335 (W) x 89.5 (H) x 230.5 (D) mm *Weight : 3.9 kg *XU30 is 1,400, SU30 1,700 ANSI Lumens.
Micro Portable Type
PLC-XW20 / SW20
1,100 / 1,000 ANSI Lumens
*XGA Real Projection (XW20), SVGA Real Projection (SW20) *Dimensions : 257 (W) x 75.8 (H) x 229 (D) mm *Weight : 2.8kg *SW20 is 1,000 ANSI Lumens.
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*Video 16:9 Compatibility *Dimensions : 316 (W) x 164 (H) x 480 (D) mm *Weight : 9.2 kg
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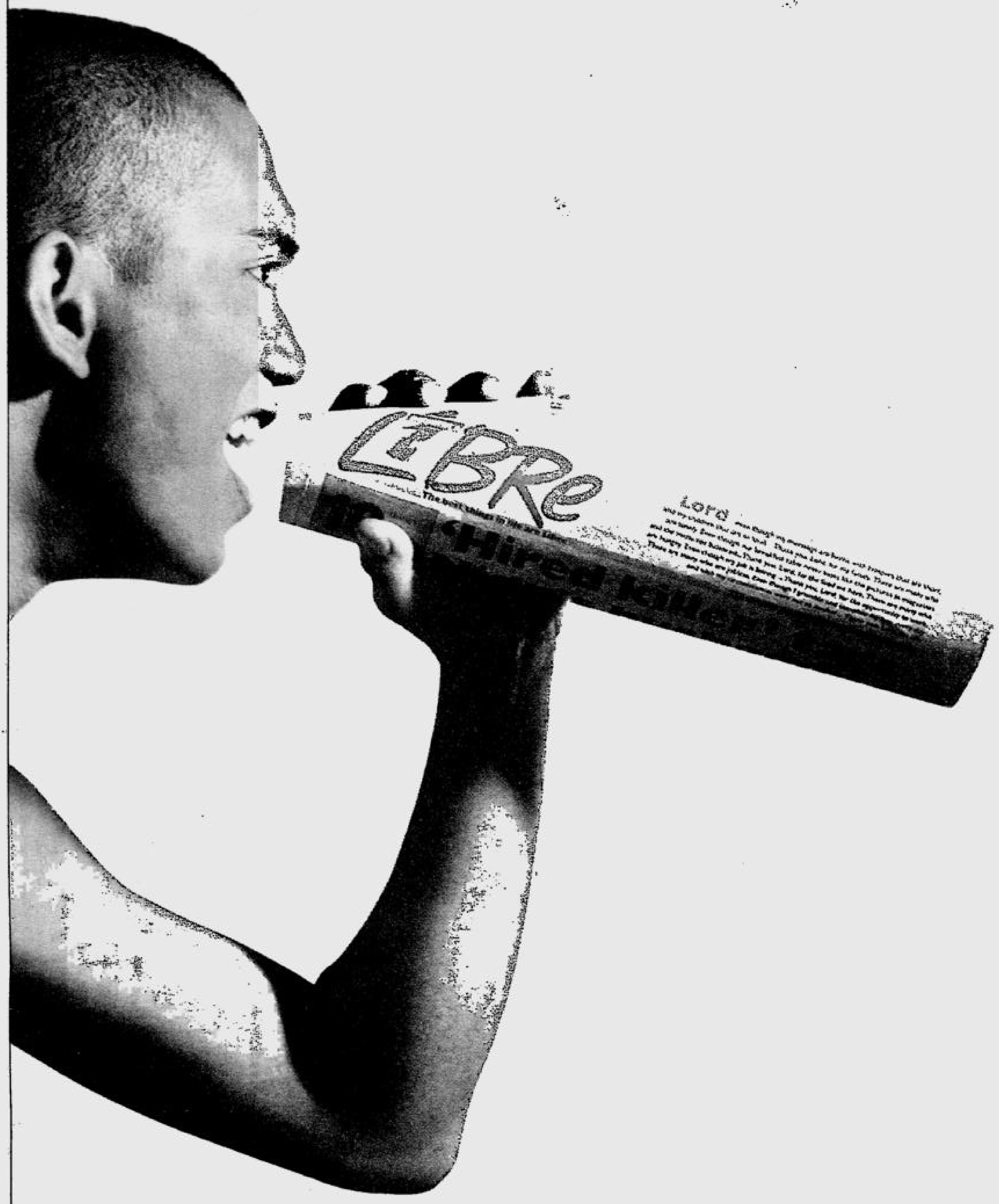

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The Best Things in Life Are **LIBRE**

Gov't to scrap local content rule on auto sector

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

LOCAL assemblers of cars, commercial vehicles and motorcycles will not be required to acquire components from domestic producers starting July next year in compliance with the country's commitment to the US to drop local content requirements.

Executive Secretary Alberto G. Romulo signed Memorandum Order No. 51 mandating the phase-out of local content requirements starting July this year until its abolition in July 2003.

Based on MO 51, the local content requirement on cars will be slashed from 35 percent to 30 percent in July this year and to zero in July next year; commercial vehicles will have their local content requirement reduced from a range of 11-40 percent to 10-33 percent in July this year and to zero in July next year, while the local content requirement on motorcycles will be lowered from a range of 30-39 percent to 26-33 percent in July this year and to zero in July next year.

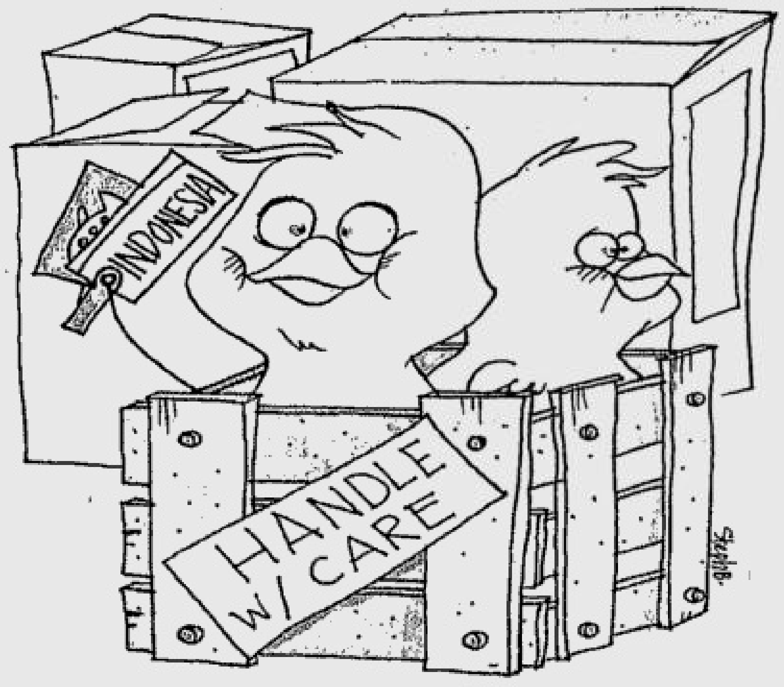
Along with the abolition of the local content requirements, the government has likewise ordered the elimination of the net foreign exchange requirements on the assemblers of cars (15 to 75 percent), commercial vehicles (15 percent), and motorcycles (5 percent) by July 2003.

The amendments to the government's various vehicle development programs were meant to fulfill the country's commitment in eliminating non-tariff barriers collectively known as Trade Related Investment Measures (Trims).

The US filed a case with the World Trade Organization against the Philippines a few years ago for the country's failure to abolish by 2000 its Trims, specifically the local content and foreign exchange requirements which, Washington claimed, discriminated against American carmakers.

The Philippines had batted for a five-year extension to give local parts makers more time to cope with the ill effects of the 1997 financial crisis but the US had agreed to a phase-out period of only three years.

Vitarich subsidiary exports day-old chicks to Indonesia



VITARICH Corp. yesterday announced that its subsidiary, Breeder Master Inc. (BMI), had bagged a new deal to export half a million day-old chicks to an Indonesian company. This followed the first shipment by BMI of a smaller volume of day-old chicks to the same Indonesian firm last month.

The initial delivery of 22,000 Cobb parent breeders to Jakarta-based PT Galur Cobb Indonesia, a member of the Subur Group of Companies, was the first ever day-old chicks exportation made by a local company. It is considered an industry milestone that opened up a new export front for the struggling Philippine economy, said Vitarich in a statement issued yesterday.

Officials of the Department of Agriculture hailed the initial shipment of day-old chicks by BMI to PT Galur Cobb as an important impetus for the country's recovering economy.

Jesse Botial, BMI general manager, said the impressive performance of Vitarich's initial batch of day-old chicks exports, which are to become parent breeders, motivated the Indonesian company to make succeeding orders from BMI involving half a million chicks.

BMI is a joint venture between Vitarich Corp. and Cobb Vantress USA, which was set up in 1995.

Botial attributed the success of the initial shipment to the inherent superior performance of the Cobb Vantress breed, renowned in the poultry business as a high-yield meat breed. The acclimatization of the BMI-produced Cobb chicks to the Asian environment also makes it more preferable over those directly imported from Cobb USA.

Because of this, the BMI executive said, other Asian countries including Thailand, Brunei, Malaysia and Bangladesh have expressed interest in doing business with BMI.

Local independent breeders and integrators have recognized the advantage of BMI's Cobb parent breeders that enabled them to post substantial production growth in 2001, with growth projections in 2002 estimated at 60 percent.

BMI's export agreements present the industry with a profitable solution to over production and a welcome alternative to the costly early slaughter of parent stocks.

PBCom to expand branch network

By Clarissa S. Batino

PHILIPPINE Bank of Communications, the country's 18th largest lender, is planning to expand its branch network aggressively this year to widen its customer base.

PBCom president Isidro Alcantara Jr. said the bank aimed to acquire about 30 new branches to beef up its existing network of 64 branches nationwide. A branch costs about P5 million.

Alcantara said PBCom registered a 54-percent improvement in its net income last year to P238 million from P155 million in 2000 when the bank experienced a short-lived liquidity problem due to panic withdrawals following the closure of Urban Bank.

PBCom is controlled by the Luy Kim Guan family, which also operates a large copra business, with a 38-percent stake in the bank; the Nubla family with 28 percent, and the Chung family, which also owns cigar firm La Suerte with 26 percent.

While a big part of the bank's earnings came from interest or spread, the lender also posted significant gains from trading peso- and dollar-denominated government securities. Its income was also boosted by the bank's aggressive collection of receivables.

The bank's bad loans, however, accounted for almost 30 percent or P6.7 billion of its total loan portfolio of P22.674 billion as of end-2001.

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18	Meat Control Officer II	16	Doctor of Veterinary Medicine	1 year of relevant experience	4 hours of relevant training	RA 1080
10	Meat Inspector III	11	Completion of 2 years in College	2 years of relevant experience	8 hours of relevant training	First Level of Eligibility
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Deadline for submission of application - March 22, 2002

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Notice is hereby given that the property of late PLACIDA V. VALBUENA is being settled extrajudicially by an affidavit of self-adjudication by the sole heir as per Doc. No. 105, Page No. 22, Book No. VI Series of 2002 of Quezon City before Notary Public ATTY. ANTONIO G. DORONILA
PDI-March 12,19&26, 2002

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Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late REMEDIOS DEL BARRIO CUEVA who died on December 22, 1998 was extrajudicially settled by the sole heir as per Doc. No. 425, Page No. 86, Book No. XI, Series of 2002 Before Pasig City Notary Public of Atty. Arsenia N. Veloso.
(PDI- Mar. 12, 19, & 26 2002)

NOTICE OF LOSS

NOTICE ID HEREBY GIVEN OF THE LOSS OF ACR NO. E-00013203 (REPLACEMENT) CRTV NO. 34363 (D.O.348) ISSUED BY BID UNDER THE NAME OF LIANG CHIEN HSUN aka EDISON LIANG

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NOTICE TO DEPOSITORS OF THE CLOSED RURAL BANK OF PILI (Camarines Sur), Inc. (RBPI)

1. Pursuant to the commitment of the Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation (PDIC) to promptly service claims for insured deposits, an initial payoff scheme is being adopted in the closed Rural Bank of Pili (Camarines Sur), Inc. for the settlement of insured deposits with balances of P10,000.00 and below. Depositors whose deposit balances are within the said amount are requested to proceed directly to the premises of the said closed bank from March 13 to March 22, 2002, Mondays thru Fridays, 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM, where PDIC representatives are stationed to accept claims and entertain queries of depositors.

   Settlement of insured deposits above P10,000.00 will be made and announced as soon as the examination of deposits is completed by PDIC.

2. Depositors are advised to present the following requirements to our representatives when filing their claims:
   a. Original evidence of deposit such as Savings Passbook and/or Certificate of Time Deposit; and
   b. Latest identification document (ID) bearing the depositor's signature.

   Other documents may be required by our representatives in the course of their processing of claims filed.

3. Pursuant to the provisions of R.A. 3591 as amended by R.A. 7400, the prescriptive date (last day) for filing of claims for insured deposits in the closed Rural Bank of Pili (Camarines Sur), Inc. is on **August 12, 2003**. After **August 12, 2003**, PDIC as insurer, shall no longer accept any claim for insured deposits maintained with the said closed bank.

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Her bereaved children **Danilo, Rosemarie, Lourdes, Gilda Marita**; children-in-law **Rosario Guevara, Lito Aquino, Miguel de Villa, Jose Segismundo Jr.** & **Nilo Tuazon**; her grandchildren, great grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her cremated remains lie in state at the Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, March 13, 2002 after the 2:00 PM Mass.

In lieu of flowers donation to the Carmelite Sisters of Lipa will be greatly appreciated.

Happy are those who have died in the Lord; Let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them. — Rev. 14:13

Our Dearly Beloved

PAZ (Pacita) PEÑA PURUGGANAN

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 11, 2002 at the age of 83 to join her husband **Litong** *and son* **Bobby**.

Her bereaved children **Milagros, Drs. Francisco** and **Myrna, Engr. Cosme & Evelyn, Mary Jay & Ulysses, Judge Lucia, Concepcion Paz & Jose Jerome, James & Gemma, Rosita**; grandchildren **Emil Geoffrey, Anna Katrina, Jason, Carla, Eugene, Eric, Mary Paz & Marco, Joseph Andrew, Denielle, Mary Dianne, Ralph Janssen**, and **Jasmine**; great grandson **Lyrick**; relatives and friends request pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Mt. Carmel Chapel, Mt. Carmel Shrine Parish, Doña Juana Rodriguez Sr. Avenue, Broadway New Manila, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday, March 16, 2002 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:6

In Loving Memory
of

SIMEON DE OCAMPO

March 12, 1906 - March 10, 2002

His children **Connie** and **Raf, Restie** and **Chit, Bessie** and **Mauro, Benny** and **Ningning**; grandchildren and great grandchildren request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

He lies in state at Funeraria Enriquez, Tarlac City.

Funeral Mass will be on Wednesday, March 13, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. at the San Sebastian Cathedral, Tarlac City.

Interment will immediately follow at the Tarlac Catholic Cemetery.

To the Family and Friends of the late

Atty. Josefina Soriano Bilar

The following masses will be held on March 12, 2002 in remembrance of her Ninth Death Anniversary

Our Lady of Fatima Parish .... 7:30 p.m.
Philamlife Village, Las Piñas City

San Lorenzo Ruiz Minor Basilica .... 12:15 p.m.
Plaza Calderon, Manila

Sta. Mesa Parish Church .... 6:00 p.m.
Old Sta. Mesa, Manila

FR. WILLIAM L. HAYES, S.J.

Was called home to the Lord on Sunday, 10 March 2002.

Wake: Oratory of St. Ignatius at Loyola House of Studies,
Ateneo de Manila University Campus, Loyola Heights, Quezon City
Concelebrated Mass every evening at 8:00 PM.

Funeral Mass: at 8:00 AM on Thursday, 14 March
in the Oratory of St. Ignatius, Loyola House of Studies.

Interment: Sacred Heart Novitiate Cemetery, Novaliches, Quezon City
immediately after the Funeral Mass.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE REPOSE OF HIS SOUL.

"There is no such thing as death. There are only the living, on earth and beyond. Death is nothing but a moment, a second, a step; the step from temporary to permanent, from temporal to eternal."

Our Beloved Tatay

Engr. Antonio E. Casal

of Carmona, Cavite and Tacloban City

Peacefully joined his Creator on the 9th day of March 2002 at the age of 90.

We, his family, his loving wife **Mercedes V. Casal**; his children and in-laws **Edgardo** (†) and **Edita, Corazon** and **Ramon, Antonio** and **Perlita, Marylin** and **George, Cesar** and **Imelda, Emmanuel** and **Elvira**; his brothers and sister and in-laws **Cesar** and **Pilar, Francisco** and **Antonina, Ester** (†) and **Gaudencio** (†), **Alfredo** (†) and **Trinidad** (†), **Raphael** (†) and **Pilar** (†); request all those whose lives he may have touched, to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at his residence in 62 Juan Luna Street, Tacloban City. Interment will be on Wednesday, March 13, 2002 at the Leyte Memorial Park, after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at San Antonio Church, Tacloban City.

MESSAGE OF THANKS

We, the family of the late

GLENN RODRIGUEZ CORTES

who passed away in the Grace of our Lord on March 7, 2002

wish to express our heartfelt gratitude and sincerest appreciation to all those who offered Masses and prayers, sent flowers and messages of sympathy and who in countless ways, condoled with and comforted us in our hour of bereavement.

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CHONA STA. ROMANA-NARCISO

12 March 1953 - 25 February 1988

Her son **Victor**; sister and brothers **Neni** and **Elfren, Chito** and **Nancy, Nelin**; nieces and nephews **Tanya, Roel, Aina, Norman, Christopher**, and all those dear to **Chona** request your continuing prayers for truth, justice and peace.

Chona will be fondly remembered at the 6:00 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. celebrations of the Holy Mass today at the Jesus the Divine Healer Parish, Tahanan, Village, Parañaque.

Your support of the Ma. Corazon Lucero Sta. Romana Commemorative Scholarship managed by the St. Scholastica Research and Development Foundation, Inc. will be most appreciated.

On March 11, 2002 (2:50 A.M.)

JOSEPH RAMOS WYCOCO

of Cabanatuan City

Age 20 years old, born February 2, 1982
Went home to his Creator.

His parents - **Eric Wycoco** and **Yolly Wycoco**; His brother - **Ronald Wycoco**; His sister - **Kaye Wycoco**; His grandfather - **Judge Cecilio F. Wycoco** (†); His grandmother - **Josefina A. Wycoco**, His Uncles, Aunties and the rest of his family, request the reader to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the family residence, No. 78 Doña Encarnacion Avenue, Kapt. Pepe, Cabanatuan City.

Interment is tentatively set on March 14, 2002.

SISINIO LUCENA y DUCEPEC

1931 - 2002

H.S. San Beda, 1949
M.D. FEU Medicine, 1957

Beloved husband of **HENRIETTA BAUTISTA**; beloved father of **RAFAEL, RUBY** and **PERFECTO CRUZ**; grandfather of **ALEXANDER** and **ANGELICA**.

A Memorial Mass will be celebrated at his home on Friday, March 15, 2002 at 12:00 noon.

HERMINIA REYES SANTOS

Peacefully joined her Creator on March 9, 2002 at the age of 75.

Her bereaved children **Beth** and **Wally Buenaventura, Pepot** and **Ella Ortañez, Joji** and **Sands Songalia, Pagie Santos Flora**; and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Capilla D, Arlington East The Garden Chapels, Pasig City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, March 13, 2002 after the 1:00 p.m. Mass at Immaculate Concepcion Parish (Pasig) church.

Pag-Ibig to be kept intact, attached to housing dep't

THE HOME Development Mutual Fund or Pag-Ibig Fund, being a pillar of the national shelter program, will be attached to the proposed Department of Housing and Urban Development, Senate Majority Leader Loren Legarda said.

Legarda, however, assured Pag-Ibig officers, employees and members that the Fund's organization and resources would be kept intact once the DHUD is created by an act of Congress.

"There will be no abolition or disintegration of Pag-Ibig. The Fund will continue to operate under its own charter even if it is attached to the (proposed) DHUD," Legarda pointed out.

Administrative autonomy

"Pag-Ibig will keep its administrative autonomy. The Fund is adequately protected by Presidential Decree 1752 (its charter)," Legarda added.

"The purpose of the proposed DHUD is mainly to ensure the focused execution of the national shelter program," Legarda stressed.

"It is only proper that all relevant entities, including Pag-Ibig, which is a state-run Fund privately owned by contributing members, be attached to the proposed DHUD and put under the supervision of the housing secretary," Legarda said.

"In fact, over the years, even without the DHUD, Pag-Ibig has always been attached to the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, which is under the housing chief," Legarda said.

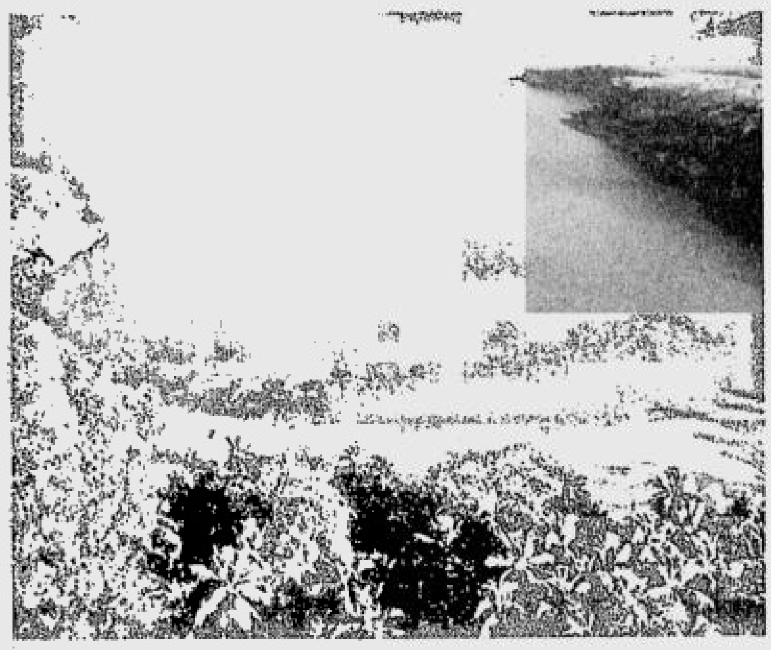
Full support

Legarda, meanwhile, urged Pag-Ibig officers and employees to provide full support to their new chief executive officer, lawyer Romero Quimbo.

"We should give the new (Pag-Ibig) leadership a chance to succeed," she said.

Quimbo earlier assured the 4.6 million members of Pag-Ibig that he would protect their funds, and that their hard-earned contributions would be used exclusively for their benefit, as provided for in the HDMF charter.

Pag-Ibig now has assets of P120 billion and a net worth of P90 billion. It has P45 billion in receivables.



BAMBOO Beach will be the centerpiece of Kawayan Cove, a boutique residential community by Edge Properties.

Kawayan Cove to be launched

FABLED Bamboo Beach will be the centerpiece of Kawayan Cove, a boutique residential community soon to be unveiled by Edge Properties Development Corp.

Situated in Nasugbu Batangas, Kawayan Cove is a low-density enclave of prime lots nestled on the lush slopes around Bamboo Beach. Kawayan Cove offers panoramic views of historic Fortune Island, site of naval battles during the Spanish era and the western Batangas coastline that is fast becoming the Philippine Riviera.

Perfect for swimming, Bamboo Beach is a crescent of fine white sand fronting the blue waters of a secluded cove. Kawayan Cove's headlands, green with trees and various species of bamboo, completely surround the cove. The setting is pristine and unspoiled yet just a 2-hour drive from Makati.

The EPDC has engaged some of the country's most respected and experienced architects and engineers to design and help execute the project. They are Leandro V. Locsin Partners, architects; EGD Lopez and Partners, site planners; TCGI Engineers, engineering design; DCCD Engineering Corp., construction management; Davis Langdon and Seah, quantity surveyors; and PDAA Design International, landscape architecture.

The EPDC is headed by Jose R. Puyat III, vice president and director of Gonzalo Puyat and Sons Inc. and VP of the Puyat Sports Group that comprises 20 bowling and billiards centers carrying the "Paeng's," "AMF-Puyat" and "Puyat Sports" brands. At the helm with him is his father, Jose G. Puyat, chair of Puyat Sports, former president of Puyat Steel and the Philippine Chamber of Wood Industries, and former Minister of State for Energy.

Celedonio V. Pile, former Landco executive and Punta Fuego Beach Club director, is EPDC's business and marketing consultant.

THE DEVELOPMENT'S technical experts, from left, are Tadashi Ota, president of Nippon Housing Phils. Inc.; architect Enrique Gozar, Gozar Planners (HK) Ltd.; engineer Servando Aromin of Aromin + Sy & Associates; Ian Campbell of I.A. Campbell &; Associates Inc.; Alfred V. Ty, SVP of Federal Land Inc.; architect Ricardo S. Dela Rosa Jr. of GF & Partners Architects; Chan Say Lim of Baywatch Project Management Group; engineer. Joey Talusan of Federal Land; Malcolm Anderson, president of Davis Langdon & Seah Phils. Inc.; and Mitsukazu Nakata of Sumitomo Construction Co. Ltd.

Anchor Bay Tower breaks ground

THE GROUNDBREAKING ceremonies and first concrete pouring for Anchor Bay, the newest residential tower to rise at Metropolitan Park near Manila Bay, was held recently.

This tower is the third of the luxurious Bay Gardens development that is located at the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Edsa, and part of the 40-hectare master-planned community being developed by Federal Land Inc.

Luxurious yet affordable

Anchor Bay Tower will be an 18-story luxurious, yet affordable, condominium that will showcase one-to four-bedroom suites. Each unit features floor-to-ceiling bay windows that provide an excellent view of the bayside sunset or the Makati cityscape. Built amid wide open road networks with over 60 percent open space, this development is an ideal home investment for couples and families that wish to enjoy nature, without having to leave the city limits.

Other facilities will include a heated indoor lap pool and access to the outdoor resort-style pool of Crystal Bay Tower & Boardwalk Tower that are already available for viewing. A basketball and tennis court, children's outdoor playground and high standards of safety and security features are only but a few of the many features of this Bay Gardens development.

Built by a world-class team of architects, structural designers, engineers and contractors, the "double foundation" hybrid technology that is being used in the construction, has been tried and tested in many countries and projects beside the sea.

Other projects

Other developments currently located at the Metropolitan Park are Toyota's Number One Showroom, Toyota Manila Bay, Le Pavilion, the newest event "tent" with over 1,800 sq. m of space ideal for the hosting of big conferences, exhibits, social gatherings, graduations, sports activities, etc.; and the Metrogarden, which is also available for outdoor activities.

Other planned developments at Metropolitan Park are the opening of the Central Boulevard, a four-lane (each way) boulevard that will run parallel to Roxas Boulevard and provide easy access between the CCP complex and Coastal Mall; the "new" Manila Doctor's Hospital scheduled for groundbreaking within the next year; a mega-gas station and various dining and entertainment concessionaires.

Bay Gardens is another quality project developed by Baywatch Realty Corp., a joint venture of Federal Homes Inc. and Mitsui & Co. Ltd. Japan. Federal Homes Inc. is an affiliate of the Metrobank Group of Companies.

Open house activities set at Governor's Hills

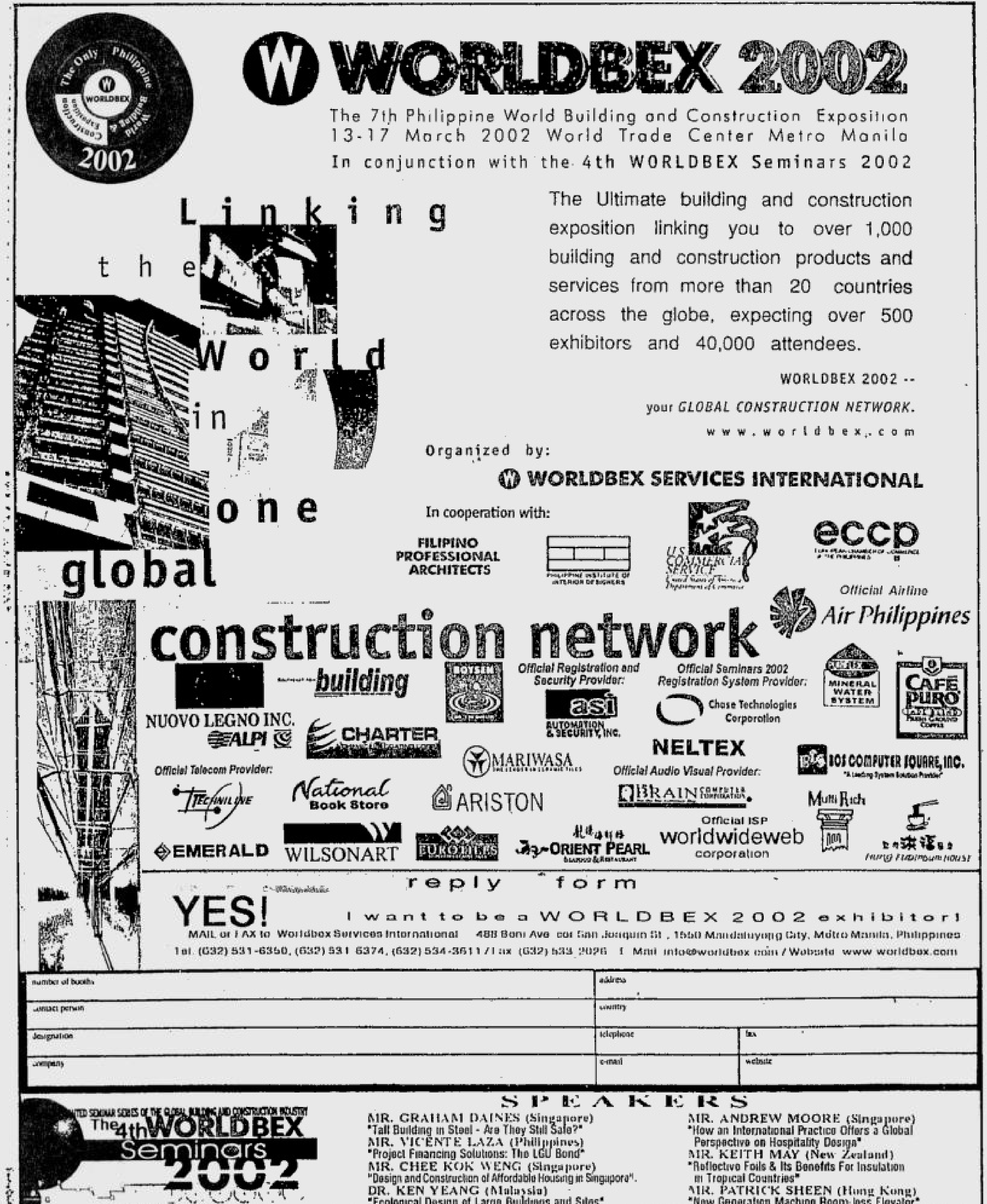
AFFORDABLE housing developer Empire East Properties Inc. is holding a series of open house activities for its flagship residential and commercial community project, Governor's Hills, in Gen. Trias, Cavite, on Sunday.

The open house series will feature residential phases 1 to 6 and the recently launched phases 7 and 8. Empire East will also offer the commercial areas of its flagship development to investors. The company's innovative house designs will be made available to interested lot buyers of phase 8.

According to EEPI vice president for sales and marketing Emil Perez, the open house series is part of the company's stepped-up marketing drive for the 89-hectare Governor's Hills community. The company is planning to put up an additional satellite sales office in downtown Manila by the third quarter of the year to beef up its existing marketing offices in Las Piñas and Dasmariñas, Cavite, Perez said.

Additional plans include the establishment of specific zones in the township's commercial area and an intensive marketing training program for its sales teams here and abroad. The company currently maintains marketing agreements with brokerage firms in Asia, Europe and North America.

P5B WORTH OF PROJECT
Keppel Philippines Properties Inc., a subsidiary of Keppel Land Ltd. of Singapore, has recently appointed RGV Real Estate Center as its lead marketing group for the sell-out campaign of Palmdale Heights, KPPI's first middle-income residential condominium project worth P5 billion located in Pasig City that is strongly aimed at supporting the shelter industry and property market. From left are investment manager Juan Antonio S. Gatuslao and SVP Lawrence Peh, both from KPPI; RGV Center chair and CEO Rodolfo G. Valencia and president Reynaldo N. Asuncion.



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A COZY living room away from work. It's a typical one-bedroom unit's living room.

SPACIOUSLY designed kitchen of a one-bedroom unit of One Legazpi Park.

BEHOLD, above the hustle and bustle of Makati CBD is a master's bedroom. It's a typical master's bedroom of a two-bedroom unit.

A BREATH of fresh air above the Makati's CBD. Living and dining room of a typical two-bedroom unit

Ayala Land offering homes at Makati financial district for ₱20,000 a month

By Tessa R. Salazar

WHAT makes a great home for you?

Could it be a home away from the hustle and bustle of city life but would require you to travel two to three hours every day? Could home be away from the noxious fumes of vehicles but would require you to struggle with noise pollution and noxious fumes on your way to work every day?

Would you be uncomfortable at the thought that a home can actually only be blocks away from your work, from your boss and from the central business and financial district?

Not necessarily, says Ayala Land Inc. vice president for sales and marketing services Marivic Añonuevo, especially if the prospective home could shelter you from the hustle and bustle of city life—and escalating rents. And besides, there are good vibes surrounding ALI's newest high-end residential condominium. The vibe of confidence—a trademark of ALI—makes this package so attractive.

Leap of faith

Añonuevo said that ALI's newest launch could again be a sign that good times are ready to roll in the real estate industry. "It's a calculated risk," she said, even as she described the newest development as a "leap of faith."

Añonuevo hopes the euphoria cascades down to the entire real estate sector so it could eventually pump-prime the economy.

Most affordable

The newest residential development is being dangled by Ayala Land Inc. as the most affordable property to date. ALI says that it offers affordable financial policies and a lowest monthly amortization of P20,000.

One Legazpi Park, said ALI, is an enhanced version of the Asia Tower. It is a 45-story high-end condominium at the corner of Legazpi and Rada Streets, Makati City, in front of the Legazpi Park and a walking distance to Greenbelt and Glorietta.

366 units

It promises to shelter urban dwellers, young executives and even students from the hustle and bustle of the CBD with its 366 units crafted by interior designers.

One Legazpi Park consists of studios, one- and two-bedroom units and a number of three-bedroom units designed as typical flats and a bi-level and garden units.

Its typical studio unit measures 40 to 42 sq. m while a typical one-bedroom unit measures 60 to 66 sq. m or 70 to 74 sq. m. A two-bedroom unit measures 95 to 97 sq. m, a 3-bedroom unit measures 120 to 121 sq. m. A penthouse unit measures 148 sq. m or 202 sq. m. There will also be special units.

Features, amenities

Shops and offices would be located on the ground floor and would offer a host of services. The condo's amenities include a social hall, swimming pool, a day-care center with play area and a fully equipped gym.

Building features include an air-conditioned grand lobby, parking slots for all units; eight floors of parking space, four basement levels and four above-ground levels. There would be four elevators, stand-by generators for common areas and emergency outlets within the units. There would also be visual and audio fire alarm systems within and outside residential units, fully automatic sprinkler and smoke detector systems, water reservoir and separate fire reserves.

First IT mall soon to be completed

CYBERONE Mall, a pioneering IT and electronics mall located at the country's premier cyber park, the Eastwood City CyberPark in Libis, Quezon City, is on track for full completion by the last quarter of the year.

Launched late last year, Cyber One Mall will occupy the first three podium floors of Cyber One, a 30-story office tower now rising at the corner of Eastwood Avenue and E-Commerce Road inside the CyberPark.

The three-story mall will have a gross leaseable selling area of 3,500 square meters. Envisioned as a haven for computer, electronics and mobile phone aficionados. It has up to 70 prime store units available for lease to vendors of IT-related products and services.

Each floor in the mall will carry a specific product line. The first level will feature computer hardware and software stores while the second floor will showcase the latest electronics products and mobile phones. The third floor will accommodate Internet and network gaming cafés and a food court.

Cyber One Mall is being marketed by Electronic Realty Associates Philippines Inc., the local arm of a global real estate sales and services network.

"CyberOne Mall will be a showcase of our information and communications technology industry," said Kevin Tan, head of the Commercial Services Group of ERA. "The country's first cyber mall will cater to a new generation of users of computer hardware and software, mobile phones and electronics products as well as Internet and network gaming enthusiasts," he added.

Designed to be a one-stop IT and electronics shopping destination, the mall will primarily target the families residing at Eastwood City's condominium buildings as well as the office workers at the CyberPark. It will also cater to residents of neighboring village.

CONSTRUCTSCOPE

Developers meet tomorrow

RECENT amendments to the development standards for socialized and economic housing projects are among the topics to be taken up during the business meeting of the Subdivision and Housing Developers Association tomorrow, starting at noon at the Makati AB Function Room of Shangri-La Hotel, Makati City. Housing Secretary Michael T. Defensor, concurrent chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, is the guest of honor and speaker, according to SHDA national president Noel S. Gonzales. Participants are advised to fax their participation forms at 890-0323 or 890-7032.

Real estate home fair

LEADING property developers will be joining this year's biggest "Real Estate Home Fair" signaling the upward trend in the real property sector. Scheduled on March 15, 16 and 17 at Starmall in Mandaluyong and Metropolis in Alabang, the fair will be participated in by Crown Asia and its affiliates—Brittany, Masterpiece Asia and Camella Homes. It is envisioned as one-stop, everything-you-need real estate home fair. The exhibit area will exude a garden setting complete with a fountain, trellis, benches and trees and flowers. Financial institutions like Keppel Monte, RCBC and Ibank will be on hand to offer the best loan packages.

Reappointment

PRHC Property Managers Inc. was reappointed, for the third consecutive year, property and administration managers of the Lourdes Tuason Arroyo Condominium Corp. The LTACC board of directors unanimously approved the renewal of the memorandum of agreement with the PPMI to provide integrated property management and administration services for the LTA office condominium on Perea Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City. The MOA was signed by LTACC chair Raoul R. Angangco and president Rene Carlos P. Mendoza and PPMI president Miguel Ortigas Jr.

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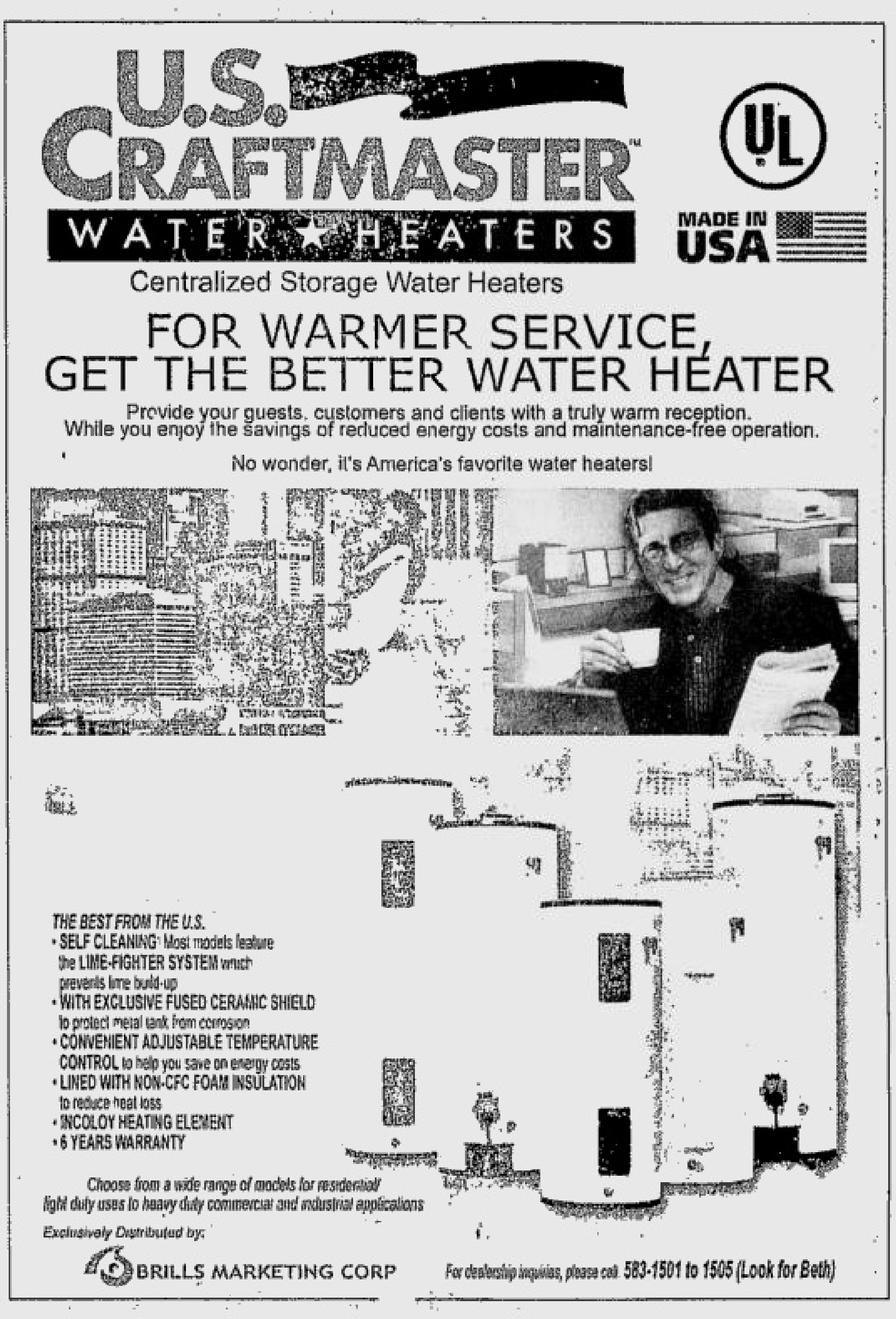

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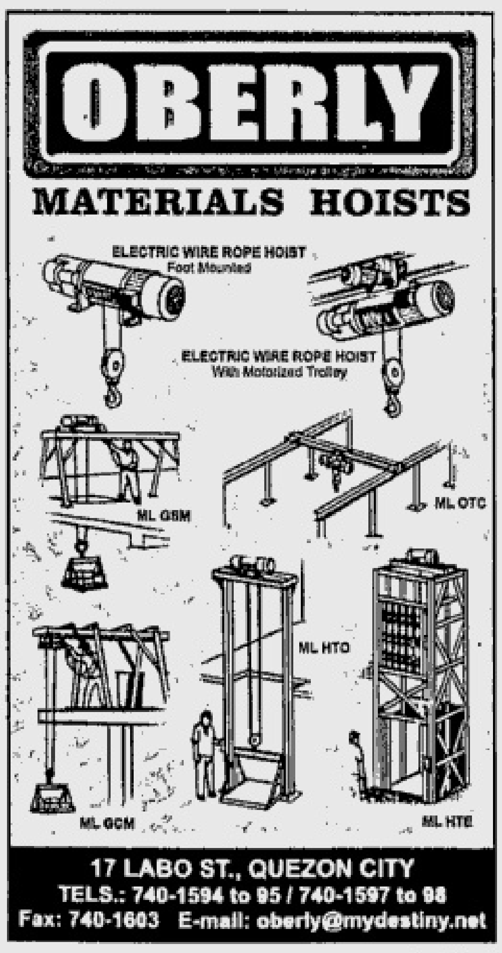

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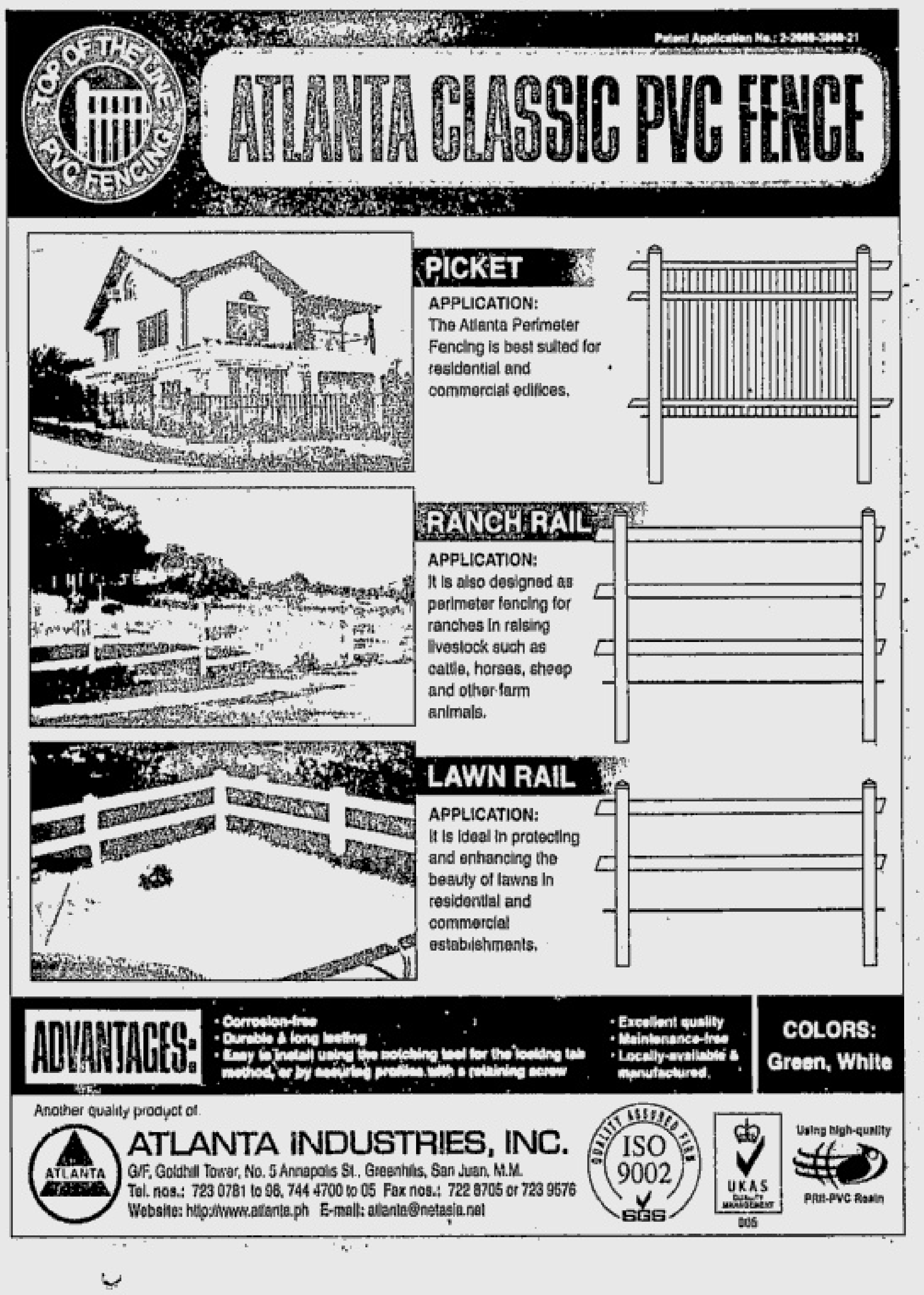

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REALESTATE

Editor **Cesar D. Mangawang**

Property market at steady pace, says report

By Charles E. Buban

THERE isn't much well-wishing going on for the property market these days. Not with the global economic hardships still dominating the news. Or the regional conflicts that may escalate into war anytime. Even the Sept. 11 attacks are still freaking many people out. But it doesn't mean no good news could ever happen these days.

In fact, here in Southeast Asia the property market is showing signs that it has seen the worst of the crisis. This could only mean one thing for the market. This sector, says a property developer, has been in the downturn for quite sometime now and that it might have already hit the bottom.

"This could only mean one thing: there's no other way but to go up. We have already experienced these boom-bust cycles many times in the past and what's happening right now is that we might be in the process of recovery," says Victor Manarang, president and CEO of One Asia Development Corp, who recently launched a P1.2-billion residential townhouse project in Quezon City.

Guarded optimism

Indeed there is reason for optimism looking toward this year. In a report of last year's property market performance, Colliers Jardine says several property indicators are moving at a steady pace.

Last year, the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board approved a total of 236,369 license units for sale. Compared to the previous year, the licenses granted increased by nearly 70 percent. But it should be noted, the report says, that such high mark was made possible only because the year 2000, where it was measured up, posted a low 139,989 of approved units, the lowest since 1992.

Still, Colliers Jardine believes that the rise supports its view that the property market has "largely bottomed out." "The variance from the long-term average has significantly narrowed, with registrations in 2001 falling by only 12 percent from the 10-year average of 267,090 units per annum," explains the report.

The Colliers Jardine report is also not discounting the possibility of a further downside in land values, as the current supply overhang remains daunting, particularly in the high-rise office and residential segment.

"Unlike more mature markets in Asia, there has been a dearth of market clearing transactions in Manila. In the absence of a landmark market clearing transaction, we expect land values to hover at current levels throughout the year 2002. Land value appreciation is forecast by the first quarter of year 2003," the report says.

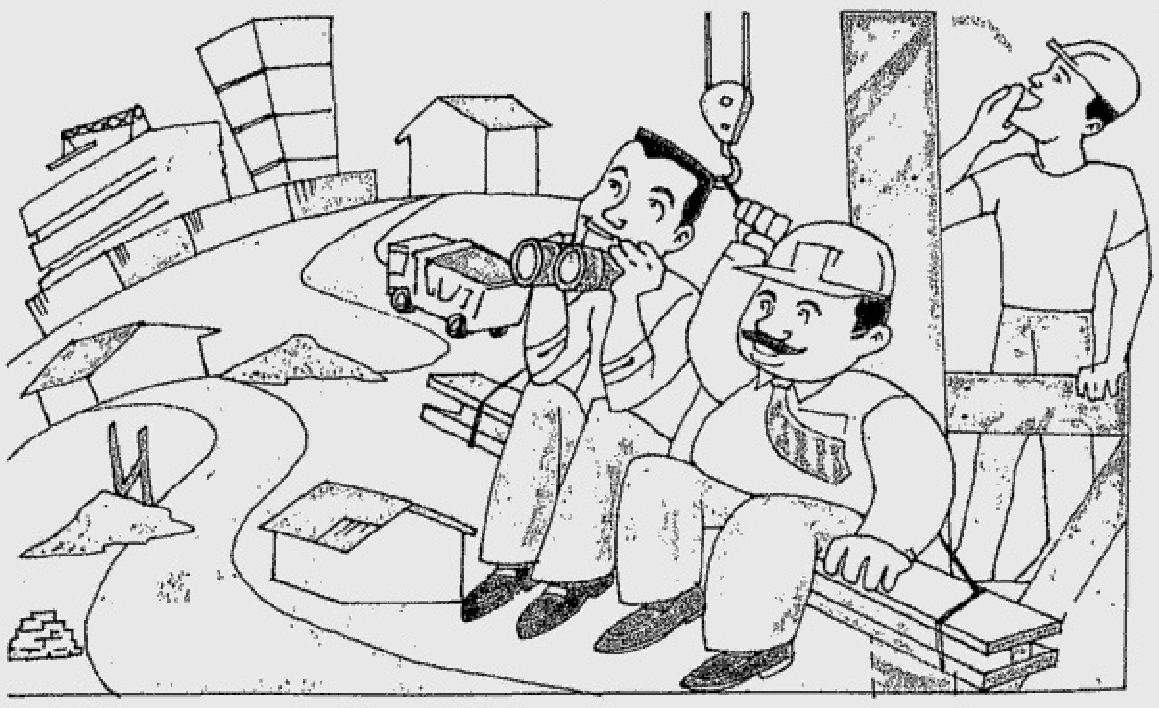

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Static land values

Land values for both prime Makati Central Business District and Ortigas have remained static in the last six months, according to the report. Lots still available for development at the Makati CBD are estimated at an average of P180,000 per sq. m. Over at Ortigas, land values have declined by nearly 60 percent to an average of P80,000 per sq. m. Land prices are estimated to have reverted to 1994 levels.

In other developments, the Colliers Jardine reports the following:

- A total of 26,141 socialized housing units was approved for sale in 2001—up by 11.2 percent compared to the previous year. Low-cost housing posted a 40.5 percent from the previous year by posting 19,561 units. However, both socialized and low-cost sectors remain below the 10-year average at 46 percent and 35 percent, respectively.
- Last year, middle-income housing posted a 55.8 percent increase at 41,601 but this is due to low base comparison from year 2000 figure. Nevertheless, registration for 2001 is still 23 percent below the 10-year average, as concerns remain on job security and consumer confidence.
- Similarly, the low base comparison led to a significant increase in the high-rise residential segment. An aggregate of 8,034 units was approved for sale in 2001 as compared to only 2,631 units the previous year.
- In 2001, office condominiums posted a 40.4 percent increase from year 2000 at 4,671 units. Interestingly, last year's registration has exceeded the 10-year average of 3,052 units.
- Last year, approvals for industrial parks are up by 35.3 percent at 115 units. However, this figure remains below the 10-year average of 311 units due to the more than ample supply of serviced industrial sites launched before 1997.

Colliers International Asia Pacific (Ciap) is the leading property services company in Asia Pacific. It is owned by the Colliers Macaulay Nicolls Group of Companies, which is the largest member of Colliers International Property Consultants. Through 33 offices in Asia Pacific and over 200 affiliates worldwide, Ciap offers a full range of property services: sales, leasing, property and project management, valuation, research and consultancy.

4,000 asbestos victims poised to file class suit

SOME 4,000 shipyard workers of former Subic Naval Base in Olongapo City have banded together to file a class suit against the United States Navy for the illnesses that they have contracted from their exposure to asbestos containing materials (ACMs) during the years they were employed at Subic.

Said former Securities and Exchange Commission chair Perfecto R. Yasay Jr., counsel of the victims: The workers have formed the Subic Asbestos Victims Association (Sava) and are undergoing further medical tests to determine the extent of their sickness. Most are suffering from asbestosis."

Adverse effect

Asbestos is a fibrous rock material used in construction, shipyard building, pipes and broilers, among others. When ingested, it settles in the lungs but its adverse effect on health will only manifest after about 20 years.

"This is exactly what happened to the Subic victims," Yasay said.

"They worked in Subic for many years and only found out they suffered from asbestosis years after the naval base closed down and the Americans had left," he added.

Need for legislation

Yasay said the plight of the victims is made much worse by the absence of a clear-cut government policy on the issue of asbestos.

"We need legislation that will once and for all ban asbestos in all forms and thus, protect our people from its ill-effects," he stressed.

More legislators have come out in support of the movement to fatally ban asbestos. Davao Rep. Prospero Nograles Jr., who chairs the powerful housing and development committee, said, "There should be no middle ground as far as the banning of harmful and toxic products like asbestos is concerned."

Batangas City Rep. Oscar Gozos in a response to calls to eliminate the uses of ACMs has also allotted P1 million to replace the asbestos roofing of the public market in Rosario, Batangas.

Dumping ground

Sen. John Osmeña, in a recent talk show, had committed to push a bill calling for the total ban of asbestos.

"It will not surprise me if the Philippines has been made a dumping ground for asbestos, which is strictly regulated or banned in other countries," he said.

Several months back, Vice President and Foreign Secretary Teofisto Guingona Jr. directed the payment of hazard pay to DFA employees who have been exposed to asbestos. The ceiling and roofing materials of the DFA Building were made of asbestos, and the Vice President had also ordered the replacement of these ACMs with asbestos-free materials.

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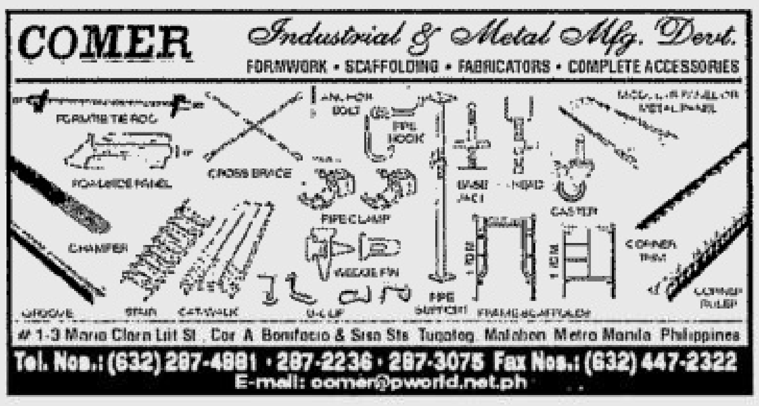

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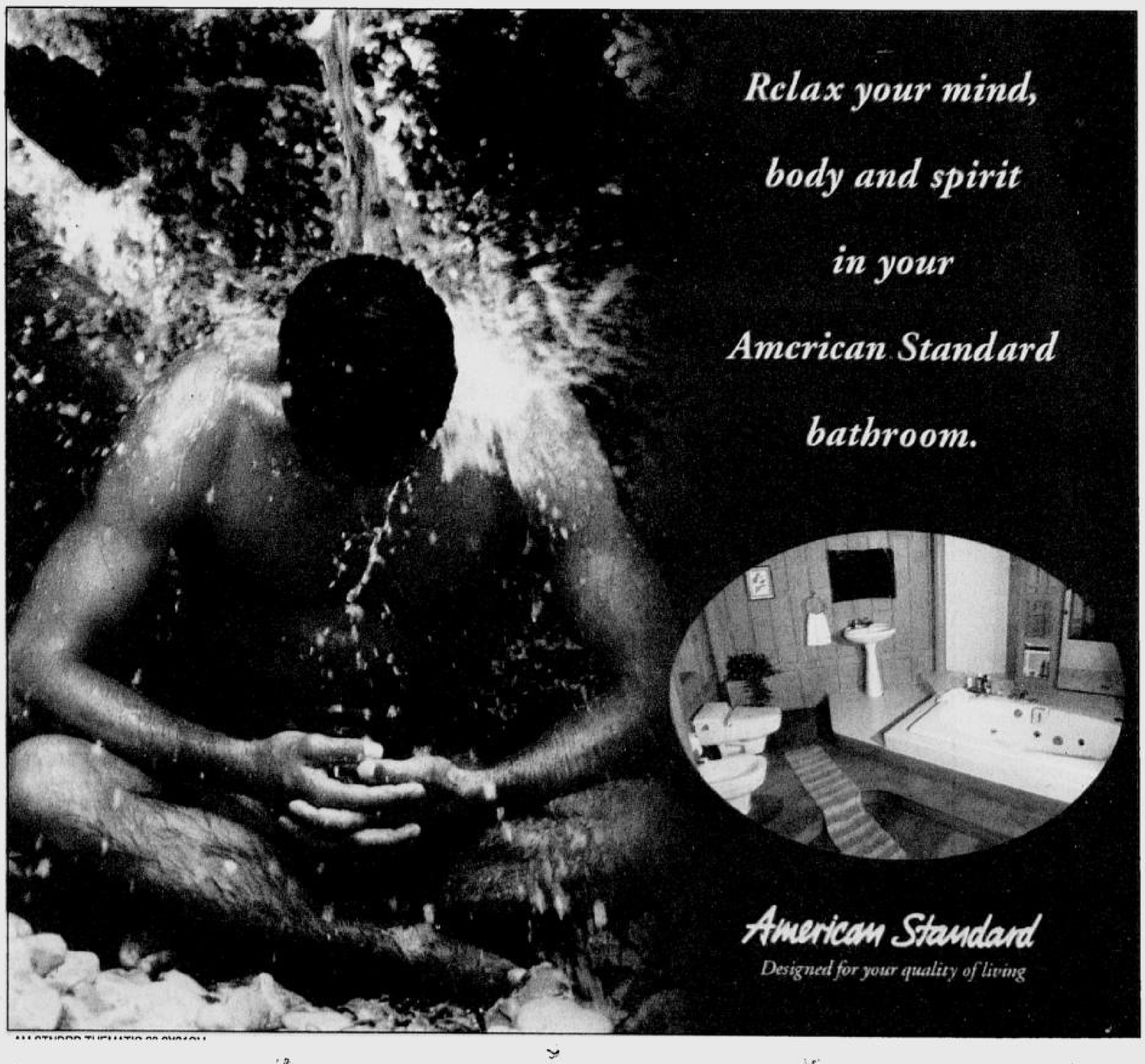

Hamburg showcases bathroom, kitchen fixtures at Worldbex

HAMBURG International Sales Corp., the exclusive distributor of the world's most recognized brands of bathroom and kitchen fixtures and accessories, will be participating in the 7th annual World Building and Construction Expo (Worldbex) slated on March 13-17 at the World Trade Centre, Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City.

Hamburg International has prepared a lavish showcase of both bathroom and kitchen fixtures and accessories that are elegant, durable and functional. Every year, the Worldbex is the venue where Hamburg International bares both classic and innovative bathroom and kitchen fixture designs that can be adapted by architects, interior designers and professionals in the construction field.

Hamburg International is the exclusive Philippine distributor of the finest and world-class brands such as Villeroy & Boch (bathroom fixtures, tiles and tableware); Dornbracht and Hansa (faucets and shower); Keuco (accessories and mirrors); Blanco (kitchen sinks) and Huppe (shower enclosure).

These brands have a global reputation for using only the highest quality raw materials, functionally engineered, and meticulously manufactured into products that go into the most luxurious bathrooms and kitchens all over the world.

CEREMONIAL BLESSING

One Legazpi Park recently celebrated the ceremonial blessing of its one- and two-bedroom model units located beside Filipinas Heritage Library on Makati Avenue. Tina Perriquet, OLP's interior designer for the one-bedroom model unit signs the intent poster at the ceremonial blessing of the model units. Witnessing the event are Francisco H. Licuanan III, president of Ayala Land Inc., and Angie Lacson, vice president and head of Residential Projects Group.

For feedback, text us at (0918)917-5026 or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

Fitness

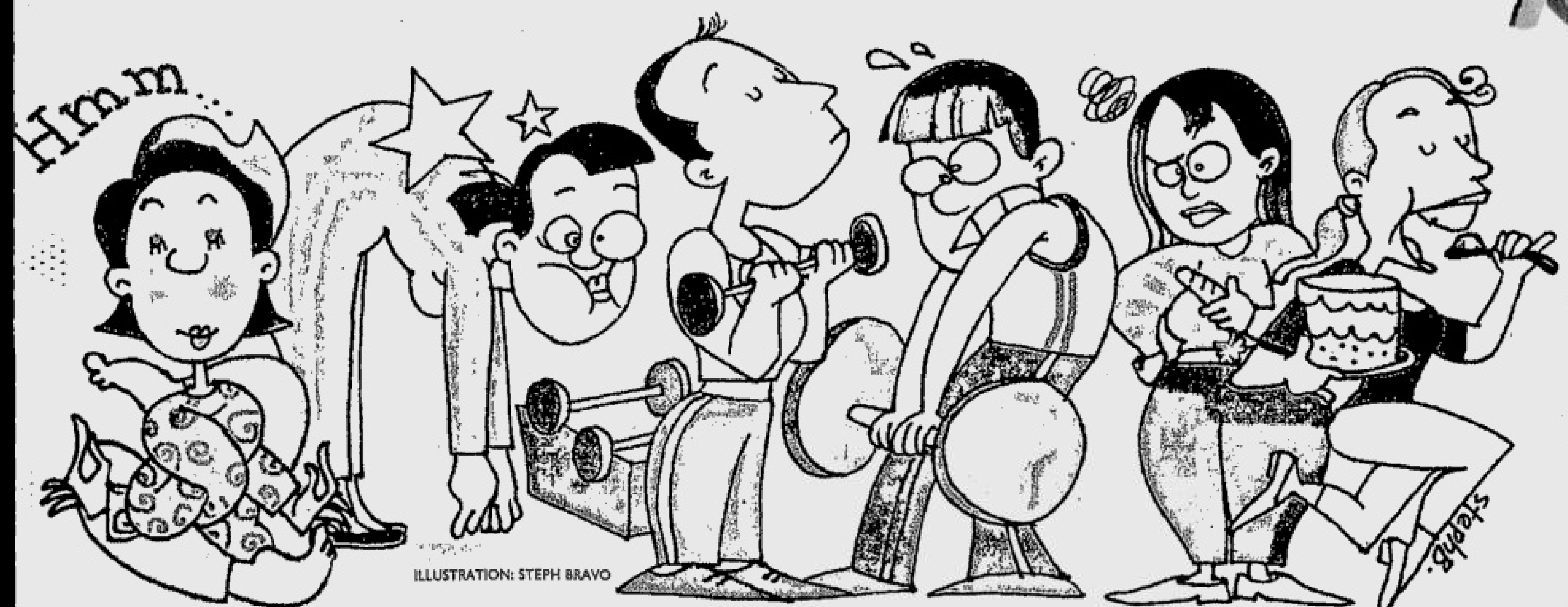

ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

Even fitness is a family affair

WELL AND GOOD

Tina Aboitiz Juan

LAST week's column was about how your genes affect the way you burn calories. It explained why some people have a harder time losing weight than other people because of their genetic make-up. This week's column is about how genetics may affect the way you get fit. It is based on the New York Times Feb. 12 article, "Why some people won't be fit despite exercise."

In spite of all the negative connotations of that title, I felt it was worthwhile writing about because the research mentioned in the article confirms what fitness professionals have long observed—that two people doing the same fitness routine will not develop the same way at the same rate.

For example, two males on the same strength-training program (lifting weights) will not get the same increase in muscle strength or size. Some men, no matter how much weight they lift, will never get as big or as strong as some of their gym classmates. Two females joining a yoga or Pilates class will not develop the same strength or flexibility.

The initial studies in this area of fitness started in 1982 when Claude Bouchard, the same scientist whose research on twins showed that weight gain or loss is influenced by genetics, chose 30 inactive people and had them exercise for 20 weeks in an exercise laboratory. The subjects exercised four times a week at 50 minutes a session. Bouchard found large differences in the results of each person in terms of stamina, endurance, body fat, strength and size of muscles. Some people improved by 50-60 percent while others did not improve at all.

He later did some studies on twins and found that if one twin improved in fitness levels, the other did, too. But if one twin did not improve, the other didn't either. This implies that genetics is a major influencing factor.

Bouchard told the New York Times that the reason he was interested in this kind of studies was because he had seen people who were known as couch potatoes but had different levels of fitness. He said, "They were very sedentary, but when we measured them, there were quite a bit of differences among them. Some had a very nice cardiorespiratory endurance, and at the other end of the spectrum there were people who were very deteriorated from a fitness point of view. I said, 'Maybe this problem is caused by genetic differences.' "

According to the New York Times, Bouchard is now in the middle of a national study that involves five universities and has 742 subjects (100 white families and 100 black families). Already the study is finding that within families there are similarities in the way family members respond to fitness training programs. Bouchard explained, "Children tend to respond the way their parents do. Siblings tend to respond like each other. The heritability of responsiveness to exercise training was at least as great as it is for body weight, blood pressure and cholesterol."

The other study mentioned by the New York Times article is the one that was done by Dr. Paul Thompson, a cardiologist at Hartford Hospital in Connecticut. Hartford had a personal interest in his research because he is a marathon runner who has never been able to grow big muscles. The study was done in collaboration with Dr. Eric Hoffman, who is a geneticist. It involved 700 men and 700 women who had never

EVEN/ p.C2

> Studies on twins found that if one twin became physically fit, the other did, too

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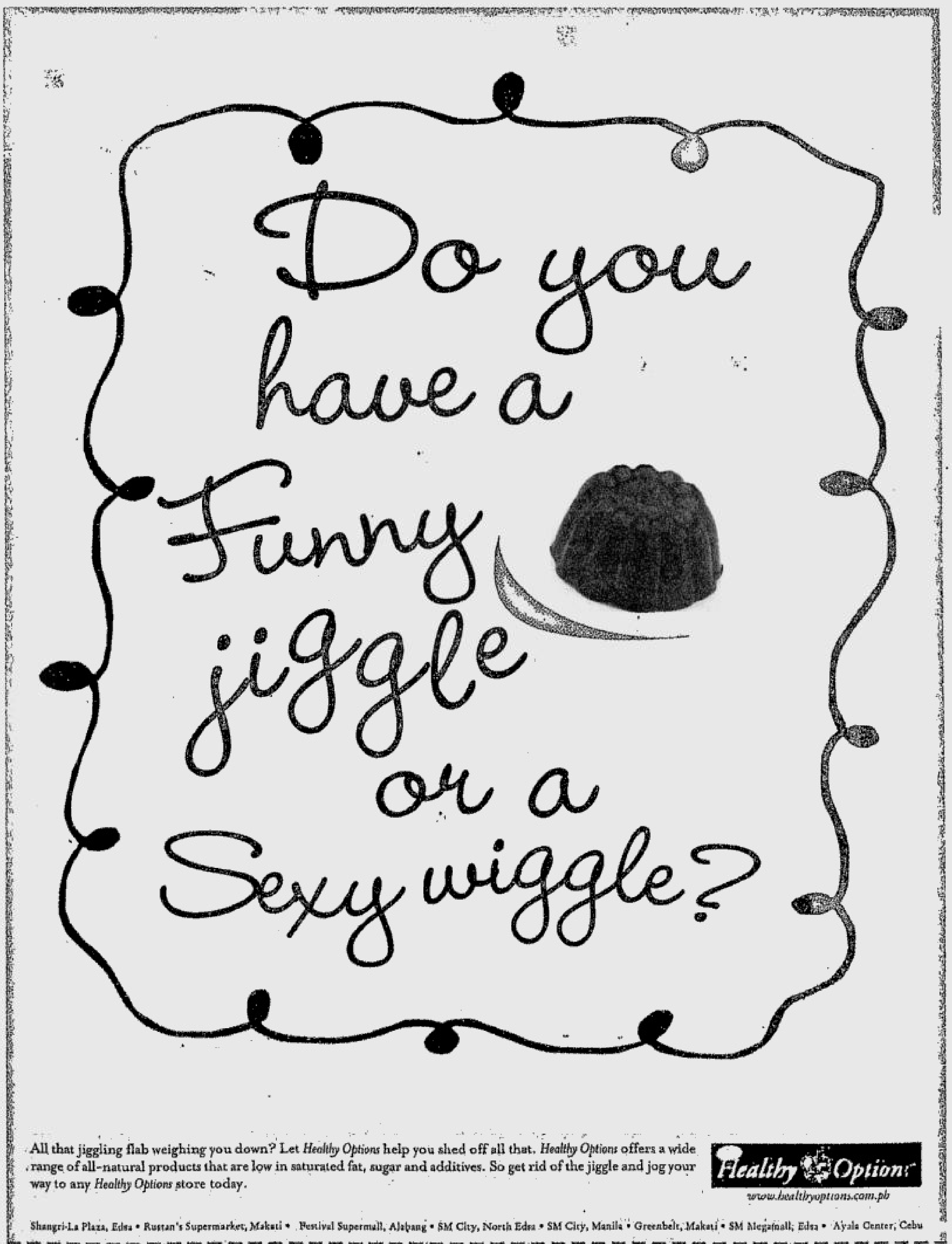
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Even . . .

From page C1

lifted weights before. To keep close control of the experiment, the subjects had to train in an exercise laboratory and they did exercises for the biceps and triceps (front and back of upper arm) of one arm only. The other arm was the basis for comparison.

Hoffman told the Times that although muscle strength and size seem to go together, they are independent responses to weight lifting. He says some people can gain muscle size but not much strength, while others can gain strength but not much size. Some people gain both strength and size, and others gain neither.

Lessons to be learned

I've realized that information like this may discourage some people, and they may use it as an excuse to give up and not even try to get fit, just like last week's column may have disheartened some people into not trying to lose weight. That is the negative and defeatist way of looking at it. However, I believe there are positive lessons we can all learn from this research:

- We are unique and we shouldn't compare ourselves to anyone else.
- "It's not what you got; it's what you do with it." Good examples of this saying are people like Albert Einstein, Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Agatha Christie. They were all people with dyslexia (a learning disability that makes reading, writing and spelling difficult) and yet they had great achievements in their individual fields.
- When it comes to fitness programs, one size does not fit all. This is a good reason not to follow the program a personal trainer recommends just because it worked for him.
- Lastly, we need to keep in mind that the research mentioned above only measured things like body fat, muscle strength and size, and aerobic endurance. Other studies have shown that even if an individual does not lose weight or get large improvements in fitness levels, exercise is still beneficial in improving blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, bone density, stress and anxiety.

* * *

THE ASSOCIATION of Fitness Professionals of the Phils. (AFPP) will hold the Baguio Fit Tour on March 22-24. The tour includes a two-day basic instructor course on Friday and Saturday at NEAP Building, Teacher's Camp, Leonard Wood Road, and a one-day fitness workshop on Sunday at Teacher's Camp Library. Call Susan Sanidad at (074) 444-9798 (e-mail isanidad@bgo.csi.com.ph) or Ellen Jereza at (02) 471-9947.

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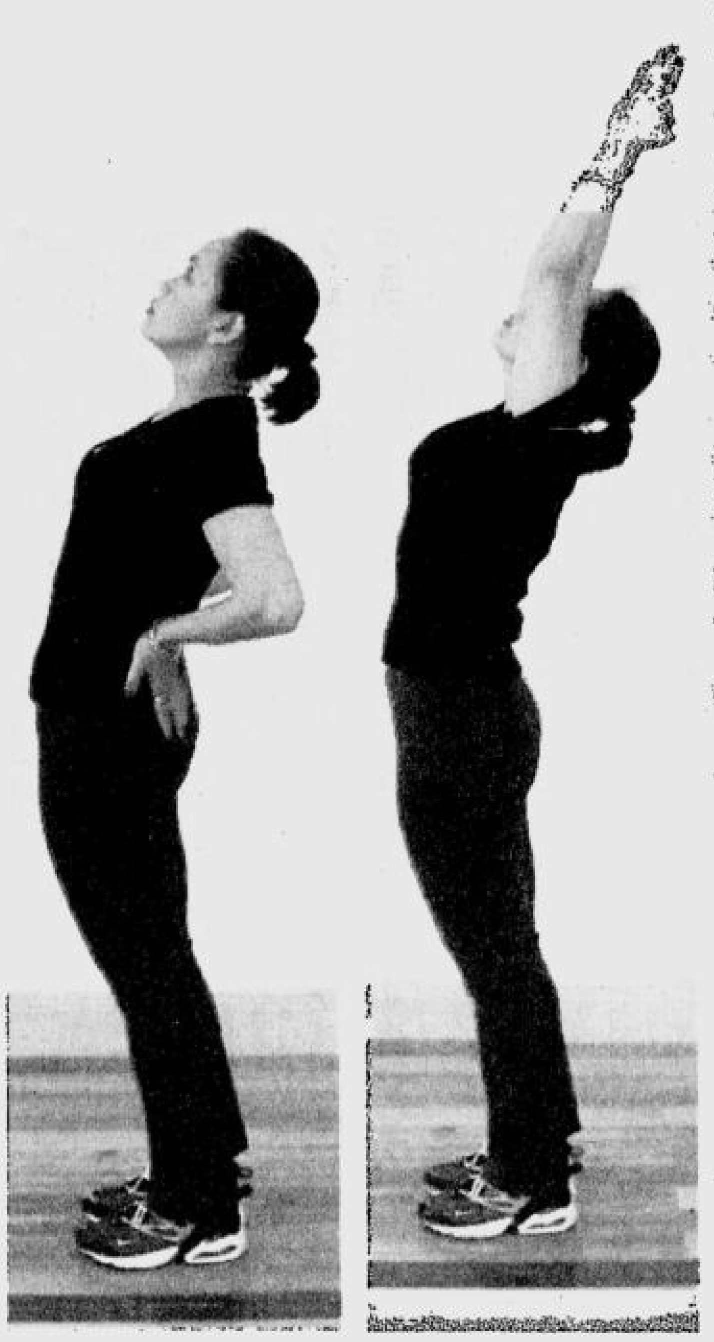
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK



Standing abdominal stretch

TO HELP prevent lower back stiffness and counter-balance sitting in a slouched position, take a stretch break every hour.

Exercise:

1. In a standing position, place your hands, fingers down, at the back of your hips.
2. Gently lean backward as you lift your chest to the ceiling.
3. You should feel a mild stretch in the abdominal muscles and a mild pressure in the lower back area.
4. Hold for 5-10 seconds.

Performance tips:

1. Instead of just arching the lower back, think of lifting the chest to the ceiling.
2. Continue to breathe as you hold the stretch.
3. For a more advanced version, bring your arms overhead.
4. If you have any kind of lower back problem, please consult your doctor first before doing this stretch.

It takes a lot of caring to bring back a smile

The emotional effects of facial deformities can be devastating to kids

By Rowena C. Burgos

TEARS were shed and hugs were exchanged as Operation Smile founders, Dr. William Magee Jr. and his wife Kathleen, met again their former patients in Naga, Camarines Sur. Presented in a press conference at the Bicol Medical Center were Valerie Ann Armea, Emmanuel Cacho, Soledad Fernandez, Wilfredo Bulaling, Vicky Briones and Maria Pesimo, who were some of the 1,500 treated for facial deformities in Naga.

It was in 1982 when the Magees first visited Naga upon the invitation of the late Camarines Sur Gov. Felix Fuentebella. "It was a very, very hot day. There were 300 children who came to see us. Parents were begging us to take care of their children. But only 40 were treated. I still remember how much joy there was in helping those we could—and the guilt and sadness we felt in leaving so many behind who still needed help," says Dr. Magee, a plastic and craniofacial surgeon.

Most of the original members of the medical mission were not interested in going back to the Philippines so the husband-and-wife team asked other friends to join them in treating the remaining 260 children. "There was no strategic plan, no grand ideas when we started Operation Smile," Dr. Magee recalls.

Like a small pebble tossed into a pool, the ripples from that first effort have grown wider. Since 1982, Operation Smile has been conducting medical/educational missions, providing reconstructive surgery and related health care to impoverished kids and young adults in 20 countries, with the aid of over 5,000 medical volunteers. It has restored smiles, hope and dignity to 60,000 children all over the world. In the Philippines, 12,000 kids and young adults had been treated in the last 20 years.

This year's mission conducted free surgical operations in four Philippine sites: Dr. Jose P. Rizal Memoral Medical Research Center in Dasmariñas, Cavite; Don Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Hospital in Cebu City; Brokenshire Hospital in Davao City; and Bicol Medical Center in Naga City. The Naga City mission was headed by Dr. Jim Sanchez and Dr. John Canady. The mission treated 150 patients in each site.

Not merely cosmetic

The emotional effects of facial deformities can be devastating to kids. They hide away from the world, their self-esteem shattered. Cruel remarks and stares from other children cause many of these kids to quit school.

"To repair a child's face is to rehabilitate not only their smile, but also their spirit. To repair a child's face is to give that child an opportunity to go to school, eat a meal and speak so others can understand. Once the physical aspect of a deformity is treated, it allows for the emotional healing to begin," Dr. Magee explains.

There are feel-good stories, however. Emmanuel Cacho was in elementary school when his classmates started teasing him because of his hare lip. Eventually, his physical defect served as a challenge to enhance his talents and skills. He is now an electronics communications engineering student at the Ateneo de Naga and is the president of his class.

Valerie Ann Armea was only 5 years old when she was operated in 1983 for her cleft-palate deformity. The second operation took place in 1986. An accounting graduate, Armea is now reviewing for the board exams.

A TEARFUL reunion: Dr. William Magee Jr. is happy to see a former patient, Elizabeth Factor, who was treated for facial tumor, lead a normal life.

It is estimated that 1 in every 500 children born in RP will have a cleft lip and/or cleft palate. Since 1989, under the auspices of Operation Smile US and Operation Smile Philippines, Dr. Jeff Murray, a geneticist from the University of Iowa, has been conducting genetics studies in the country. These were focused on the causes of cleft lip and palate and how to use this information in developing ways to prevent its occurrence and better methods of treatment.

Preliminary findings indicate that cleft lips are caused by genetic mutation and vitamin deficiency. This probably explains why most of the victims are from depressed areas.

The effort now is to validate the findings by obtaining blood samples from individuals with cleft lips and palates and their family members. DNA samples are now under genetics analysis to identify the location of genes involved in clefting.

On the nutrition side, the effort is to validate the finding of vitamin deficiency as a cause of clefting by offering a vitamin supplementation program to mothers who are participating in the research program.

This year, more than 90 foreign volunteers from Operation Smile International, composed of plastic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pediatric intensivists, nurses, dentists and speech therapists, worked side by side with the Philippine Association of Plastic, Reconstructive and Aesthetic Surgeons and other local volunteers.

"Joy is what brings us back. It's what we feel when we know that what we did gave a child the chance to live a normal life and be a face in the crowd," says Kathleen Magee, a former nurse and clinical social worker.

E-mail the author at rburgos@inquirer.com.ph

DR. WILLIAM Magee and Kathleen Magee pose with their patients during a medical mission.

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Her almost 15 years of experience in her field has made Dr. Eveleth R. Purugganan one of the preferred specialists by MEDICard members availing services from Medical City General Hospital. Dr. Puruggaran specializes in Obstetrics-Gynecology, where she received her residency training from Medical City. She also subspecializes in OB-Gynecology Ultrasound. Most of her free time is dedicated to caring for her husband and their three kids. She also spends her time by keeping herself physically fit through running sports and playing lawn tennis. Visit this athletic MEDICard doctor for your Obstetrical and Gynecological needs at her clinic, room 316 of the Medico Bldg. every Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 6 PM and on Saturdays from 2 to 5 in the afternoon.

Dr. Carmelita V. Garduque is the Associate Professor for the College of Medicine and Surgery of the University of Santo Tomas, Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila and the University of Perpetual Help System in Biñan, Laguna. Dr. Garduque specializes in Pediatric Medicine and addresses the healthcare needs of MEDICard members in Perpetual Help Medical Center in Biñan. She finished her degree in Medicine from UST and her specialization training at the UST Hospital. Currently, she is an active member of the Philippine Pediatric Society and is the Auditor for the Community Pediatrics Society of the Philippines, Southern Tagalog Chapter. Outside her clinic, she spends most of her time with family, watching TV and yes, surfing the World Wide Web. Visit Doc Carmelita for your consultation needs. Drop by her clinic at PHMC-Biñan every Fridays and Saturdays from 8 to 10 AM.

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TEXT MEDICard for your queries: 0917-7518365 (Globe) or 0919-2476240 (Smart). Please don't forget to include your complete name and landline number where MEDICard could reach you. Log on to www.medicardphils.com

MEDICard is the first and only HMO in the Philippines and the whole Asian region to be ISO 9002 certified.
ISO 9002

Forum on plight of Alzheimer's victims and caregivers

A TOUCHING scene from a commercial, showing an old man remembering his granddaughter's name has inspired the theme for a conference dealing with memory loss that afflict the elderly.

"A Forum of Alzheimer's Caregivers: Para sa Paborito Kong Apo," to be held 1-5 p.m. on March 16 at the Philippine General Hospital, Science Hall, hopes to shed light on the plight of Alzheimer's victims and the problems their loved ones face while caring for them.

ADAP's forum is open to the public. Relatives of Alzheimer's victims and others who care for them are welcome. In keeping with ADAP's objective to lessen the difficulties experienced by caregivers, the day's lectures may be accessed at adap@alzphilippines.com. ADAP's website will also be launched during the March 16 assembly.

Let us begin a new era of positive thinking

A NUMBER of people have asked me, "Is there hope for the Philippines?"

I am neither a prophet, a mystic nor a visionary, but this much I can say: The only answer to that question lies in every single individual of this land. Each of us individually and collectively must change our habitual negative patterns of thinking to something positive before we can expect any real progress to take place in our society.

INNER AWARENESS

Jaime T. Licauco

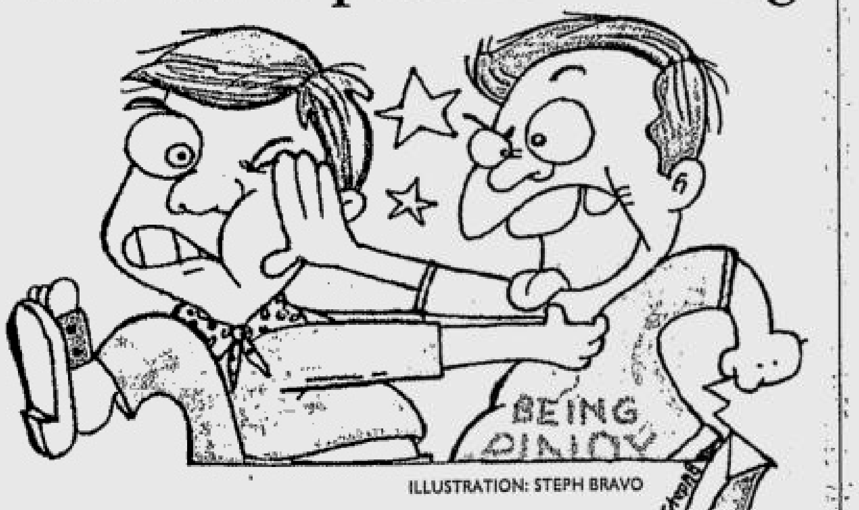


ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

We must demand from our political and religious leaders, opinion writers, media people and all those who have influence over other people to stop seeing only the negative side of things or only their individual self-interests, and begin to deliberately expand their consciousness beyond very narrow boundaries.

There is absolutely no one who can help our people better than ourselves. But the problem at the moment, as I see it, is that the greatest enemy of our people is ourselves! Our leaders can't seem to put their acts together.

We seem to suffer from a serious case of collective masochism. We love to inflict pain on ourselves. We parade before the world not our most positive and noteworthy accomplishments and traits, but our most negative and embarrassing ones. We proudly headline these in our major papers and other media. And when other people of the world call us a corrupt nation, a nation of thieves and cheats, a nation so completely inept that it cannot govern itself properly, we get mad at them.

It has become very evident that our government cannot control lawlessness, violence and terrorism, that it can no more protect our people from such elements despite protestations to the contrary. And when some sober individuals in the government seeks outside help from other governments to help us fight terrorism, those with narrow self-interests cry "foul" and complain of endangering our country's independence and sovereignty.

My God, what are they trying to say? If that very sovereignty of a people is being threatened with extinction, is crying for outside help to preserve such sovereignty a capitulation to foreign powers?

Those who protest the most against the entry of foreign assistance should provide concrete and workable solutions to terrorism before everything becomes moot and academic.

We love to argue and debate so much in this country. We are good at rhetoric, but not in action. We love to point out defects in the arguments of other people, but not to offer solutions to problems.

No one speaks with one voice in any branch of government, not in the legislative, the judiciary or the executive. Everyone seems to be fighting everybody else.

My suggestion: Let us stop arguing with one another; let us stop fighting each other. Let us work together not to protect our own self-interests but to preserve this country and allow it to finally move head.

We still have so much goodness and honesty in this country, but they are not being emphasized. What we have chosen to highlight and banner before the public and before the world are our very negative traits. Let us stop all this right now and rally around our present leaders, no matter how imperfect they are at the moment. Perhaps if we do this and give them a chance and show them we care and support them, but at the same time watch them carefully for any abuse, then we may eventually have a positive break over the sickening negativity all around us.

Filipinos seem to be a people hopelessly unable to see the goodness in themselves. We must believe first in ourselves before we can ask others to believe in us. How others see us is a mere reflection of how we see ourselves.

So how about lighting a candle today instead of cursing the dark, as the cliché goes? How about praising every good deed we see our government do instead if harping at anomalies? How about breaking finally from our long-held negative thought patterns and begin a new era of positive thinking in all things? If we do this, we may yet surprise the world, if not ourselves!

Address letters to this column to 308 Prince Plaza I, 106 Legaspi St., Greenbelt, Makati City or e-mail jlicauco@geocities.com. Visit website at http://jlicauco.tripod.com. Listen to my dzMM radio program every Sunday, 6-8 p.m.

ATHENA Claveria

GILMARIE Lourdes Pacamarra

JEANNE Harn

25 candidates vie for Bb. Pilipinas

THE BB. Pilipinas Charities Inc. announces the official candidates for this year's Bb. Pilipinas. This year's competition will present 25 young ladies from all over the Philippines vying for three major titles: Bb. Pilipinas-Universe, Bb. Pilipinas-World and Bb. Pilipinas-International.

The official candidates for this year's pageant are: Sandra Rebancos, Feilani Bennett, Athena Claveria, Lakambini Alto, Dristine Alzar, Kathleen Lloyd Cawan, Elaine Andes, Sheila Alonso, Sherlyn Ram, Mary Hyacinth Zalamea, Jazel Manalac, Sherilene Parcon, Gilmarie Lourdes Pacamarra, Kathrine Aban, Margaret-Ann Bayot, Heidi Punsalan, Katherine Anne Manalo, Anna Teresita Lopez, Karen Loren Agustin, Ma. Lourdes Magno, Mary Ann Samiado, Nuriza Abeja; Jeanne Harn, Ma. Criselda Osorio and Melanie Abigail Capati.

The 2002 Bb. Pilipinas Beauty Pageant will have its finals on March 16, 9 p.m. at the Araneta Coliseum. The pageant will be telecast live over GMA 7.

Bikini summit in Boracay

MEN and women with beautiful bodies are lining up to join this year's summer event, the "Mossimo Bikini Summit (The Boracay Bikini Championship at the Pearl of the Pacific)."

Presented by Mossimo and Pearl of the Pacific, the "Mossimo Bikini Summit" is open to males and females of all nationalities.

Those who pass the screening are featured in a series of elimination rounds at Metro Manila's top bars and nightspots.

The elimination round kicked off yesterday at Hard Rock Café Makati, 8th Day (today), Famous Mike's (March 13) and Culture Club (March 14).

Winners of the elimination round will be flown to Boracay, all expenses paid, for the finals night on April 20. The contestants will stay at the Pearl of the Pacific Resort. Prizes in cash and in kind—and a possible shot at a modeling career—await the winners.

The finals night will be taped live on April 20 and aired on May 10 on ABC 5, 10:30 p.m.-12:30 a.m.

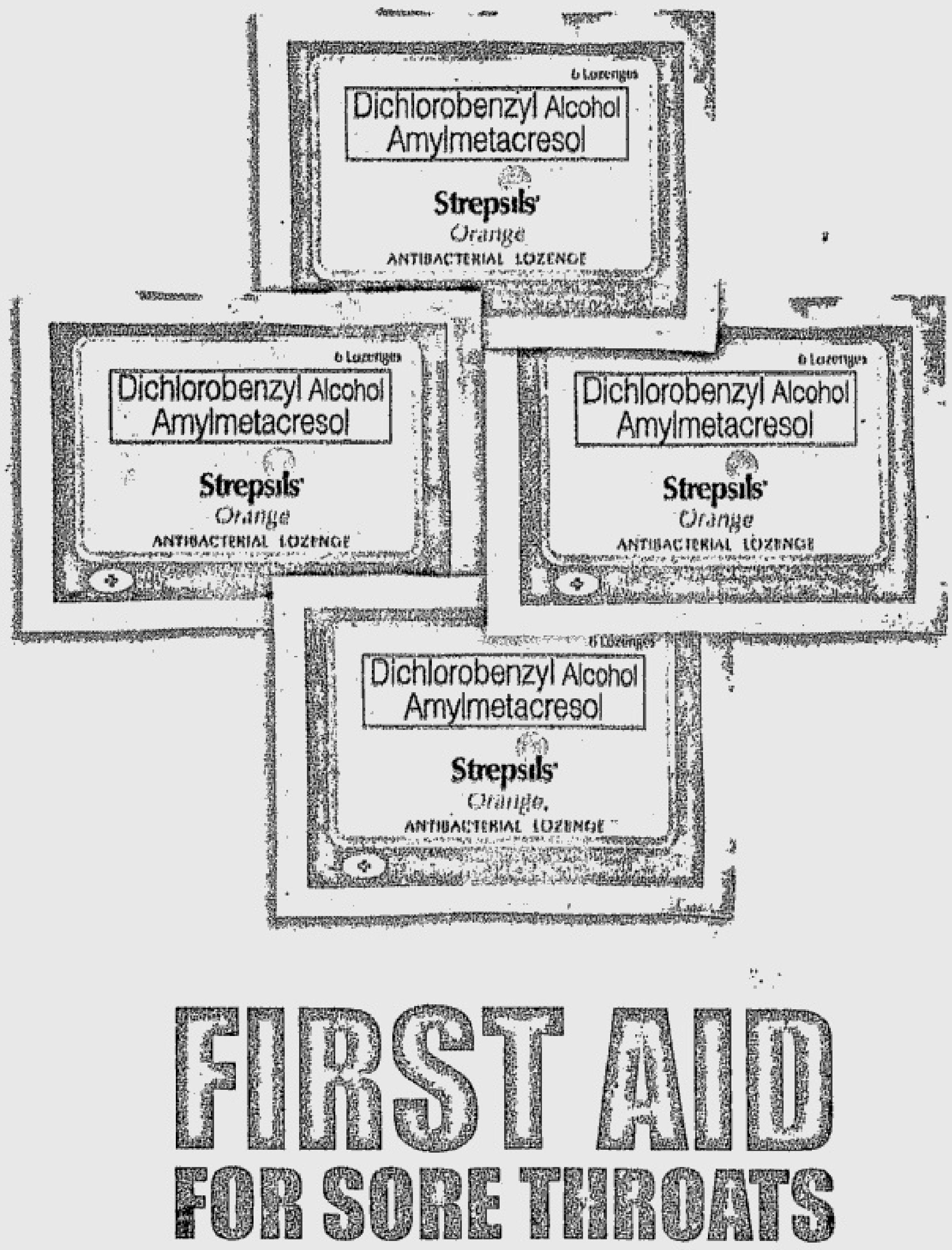
Theme of this year's contest is "Unity in Diversity—the World's Colors in Boracay." It is a tribute to the diverse nationalities that made Boracay a world-famous tourist destination.

Seminar on personality development

THE CORPORATE Mind Management Consultancy and Executive Training Company presents "Personality Development for Increased Productivity Seminar" on March 17 at the Summit Lounge of the Manila Galleria Suites, ADB Avenue, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City.

Topics for the half-day course are: discovering and nurturing your hidden potentials; making others respond favorably; getting the most from personal and professional transactions; a discussion on correct face and body language; appropriate packaging and an attractive voice.

Call 687-7898 or e-mail corpmind@edsamail.com.ph.



FIRST AID
FOR SORE THROATS

In Regular, Menthol, Honey & Lemon, Orange and Sugar-free flavors.

Light white, skin bright

INSIDE OUT

Cory Quirino

THERE are no exceptions. Everyone aspires for a life shielded from harm. But is there a formula for living that comes with a disaster-free guarantee? Unfortunately, the answer is no. Hope lingers though.

Only the wise

Wise men say that it is possible to develop spiritual or psychic self-defense. Since thought creates biology, human beings have the power to create. By using the tremendous resources of our minds and spirits, creation is a natural consequence. This only means one thing, thoughts can build castles in an instant but also destroy them immediately.

Want to construct a strong fortress? This visualization ought to put up a wall of light around you, while successfully repelling your enemies.

White light shield

1. Sit in a quiet corner.
2. Practice slow breathing (5 counts inhale, 1 count hold, then 5 counts exhale; 1 count hold. Repeat 10 times).
3. Imagine a spotlight from heaven, its white light bathing you. Say out loud, "I invoke heaven's light to shine on me now. Nothing and no one can harm me." (You may include names of your loved ones: "Nothing and no one can harm ____.")
4. Thank God for heaven's light. Be grateful.

White light has been used since ancient times as a symbol of protection. When invoked and coupled with visualization it acts as an invincible shield where any negative energy directed against you will be repulsed. Use it without hesitation.

White on white

You are now covered with light. If you want fairer skin, it can be yours right in your home.

There are two skin whitening or bleaching preparations—chemical and natural *(Refer to chart below)*.

Combine all the ingredients in a bowl and whisk until foamy. All the ingredients are available at the drugstore or beauty supply shop (except for the fruits). Apply on dry skin. Start with your feet and work your way upward to the neck area. Do not apply the chemical preparation on your face. The natural preparation may or may not cause allergies, depending on your reaction to it. To test skin sensitivity, dab a portion on the fold of your arm in front of the elbow. If redness appears, do not proceed with the treatment. Try commercially prepared skin-whitening products instead.

While undergoing a bleaching program (chemical—one application a month for two months; natural—two applications a month for three months), do not expose yourself to sunlight. It may cause skin damage. Bleaching is not for everyone. Radically changing your skin tone is not advisable nor is it natural. It is best to work and be happy with what you have.

Natural bleach

½ c soap chips
3 tbsp white henna powder
2 egg whites
Lemon juice,
calamansi or *dayap*

Chemical bleach

½ c soap chips
3 tbsp white henna powder
1 egg white
Lemon juice,calamansi or *dayap*
3 (bottle) caps peroxide (vol. 20)
3-4 drops ammonia

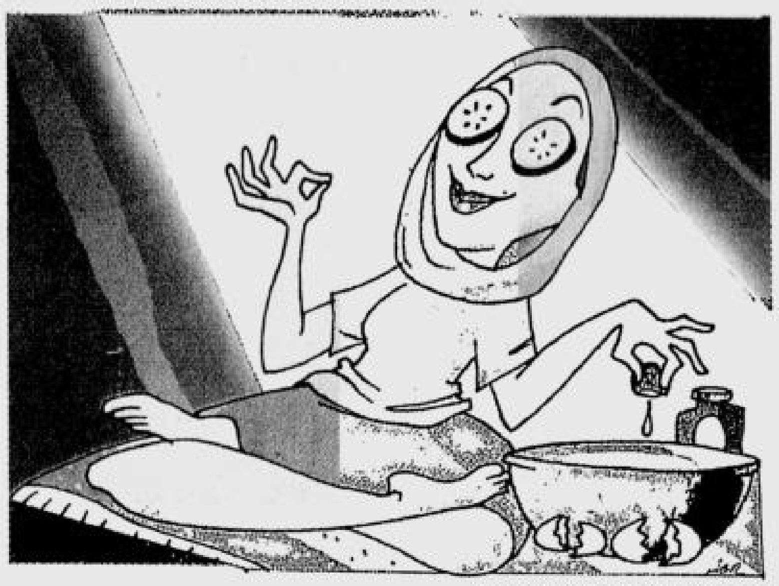
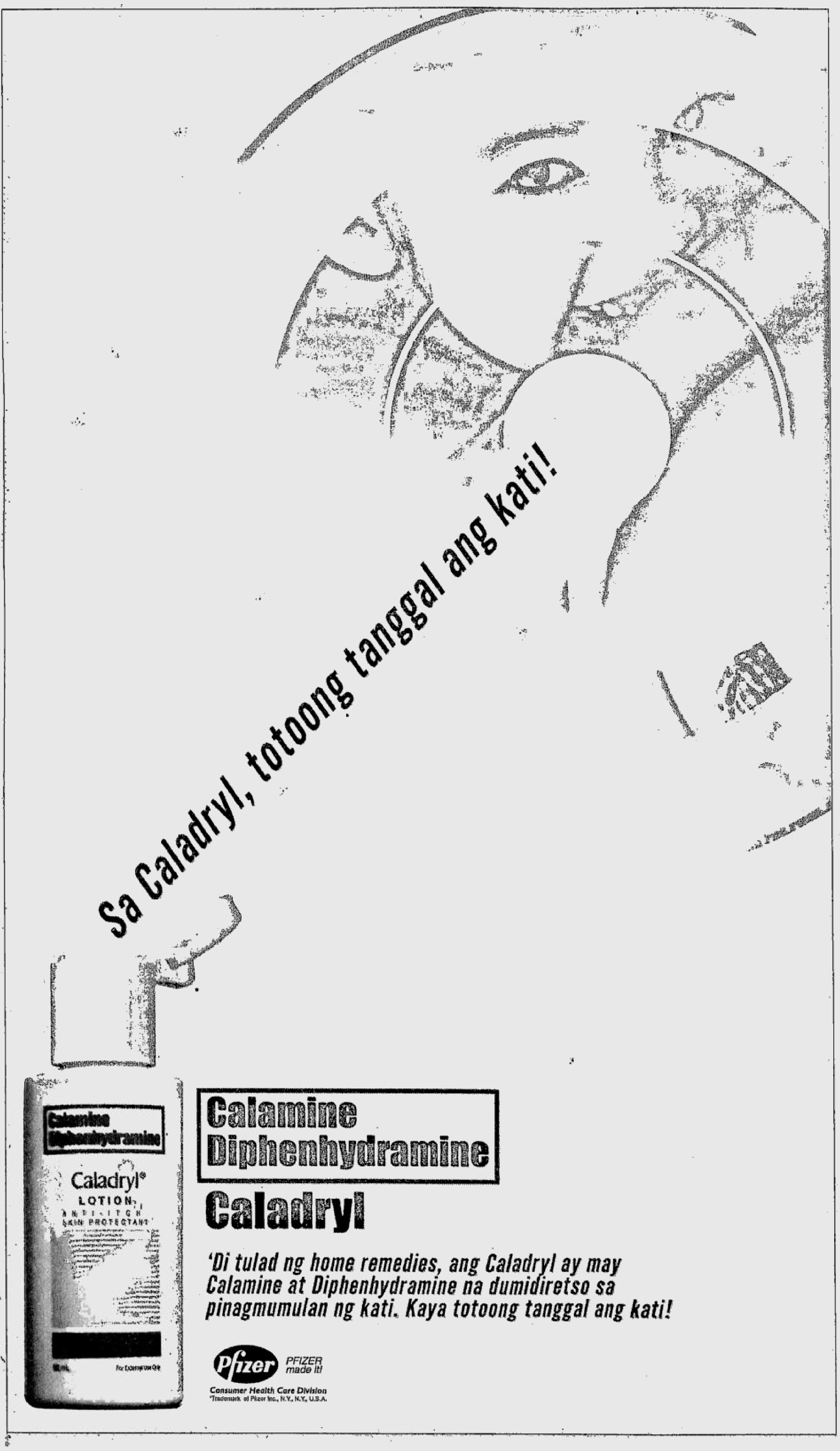


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ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Calamine Diphenhydramine
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'Di tulad ng home remedies, ang Caladryl ay may Calamine at Diphenhydramine na dumidiretso sa pinagmumulan ng kati. Kaya totoong tanggal ang kati!

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Spiritual approach to self-care and healing

A VISIT to a bookstore or library will reveal that a growing number of people are searching for practical solutions to their health needs. This is evident in the ever-growing number of books on the connection between mind, body, spirituality and healing being stocked, purchased and read.

One such book is "Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures" by Mary Baker Eddy. With over 10 million copies sold, it has been improving the health and lives of people around the world for more than 125 years now. As one of the first books to set forth the mind/body connection, it's on the recommended reading list of the Harvard University Medical Symposium, "Spirituality and Healing in Medicine," 1995-2001.

Published in 16 languages, the book includes over 100 pages of testimonials from readers explaining how they were healed and their lives changed for the better. You can join a discussion about "Science and Health" online at www.spirituality.com.

Eddy was a pioneer in the field of mind-body medicine. She discovered a spiritual connection for healing all human situations, and recorded her system of spiritual healing in "Science and Health." Included in the American National Women's Hall of Fame, her book was voted "one of 75 books by women whose words have changed the world" by the National Women's Book Association-USA. The Mary Baker Eddy Library for the Betterment of Humanity that will officially open in September in Boston, Massachusetts can be visited online now at www.marybakereddylibrary.org.

You can find out more about "Science and Health" at a discussion and workshop to be presented by Beverly Goldsmith, an international speaker, spiritual healer and teacher from Brisbane, Australia.

Goldsmith began proving the practicality of the spiritual healing system found in "Science and Health" as a young teenager after her grandmother and mother were both healed of chronic ailments as a result of reading the book. Beverly has practiced Eddy's system of spiritual self-care and healing for over 40 years. She has found this system to be effective in healing physical ailments. It cured her of migraine headaches and appendicitis.

You can join a discussion and workshop that will explore how to use "Science and Health as a Reference Book for Spiritual Self-Care and Health" on March 18, 6 p.m., at Powerbooks, G/F SM Megamall A, Mandaluyong City.

Here comes the sun

BAD news for the skin. The ozone hole continues to expand, and the skin is exposed to damaging sunrays even during cloudy and rainy days. UV rays can pass through windows and thin walls, and some artificial light sources inside buildings and homes radiate harmful UV rays.

The good news is you can avoid skin damage (like sunburn, skin reddening and premature aging) brought about by sun exposure and still enjoy the physiological benefits of sunlight.

Sunscreen protective facial cleanser is the first-ever facial cleanser that shields skin from harmful UV rays. Its hydro-alcoholic solution gently and thoroughly rids the face of dirt and oil, while its SPF 3 content protects skin from extreme heat radiation (this means that the skin receives three times more protection). What's more, Sunscreen Protective Facial Cleanser also has 100-percent natural fruit extracts that have moisturizing and healing effects. It comes in six variants for all skin types: Cucumber, Avocado, Lemon, Kalamansi, Papaya and Regular. Manufactured by The Rogemson Company Inc., Sunscreen Protective Facial Cleanser is available in leading supermarkets and drugstores nationwide.

It is common misconception that only those whose jobs require them to be constantly out in the sun are in need of sunscreen protection. Experts say that during the rainy season, or even when one is indoors most of the time, the skin still needs all the help it can get. Now, men and women can face the world without worrying about harmful UV rays by making Sunscreen Protective Facial Cleanser a part of their daily cleansing regimen.